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ABSTRACT

This journal offers a selection from papers presented at two scholarly meetings on research on film conducted at the Center for Twentieth Century Studies. Separate papers deal with the following topics: film and ideology; the filmic apparatus; the inadequacies of current conceptions of film historiography; nonlinguistic extensions of film and video; narration and narrativity in film; film history and film histories; the coming of sound to the American cinema; and the analysis of film segments. (GW)

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SPECIAL ISSUE

FILM: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THEORY AND TEACHING, PART ONE

Edited by *Ronald Gottesman* and *Michel Benamou*

Published in collaboration with
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CONTENTS

vii **FORWARD**

251 **STEPHEN HEATH**
On Screen, In Frame: Film and Ideology

266 **THIERRY KUNTZEL**
A Note Upon the Filmic Apparatus

272 **GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH**
Facts About Films and Facts of Film

276 **TONY CONRAD**
Non-Linguistic Extensions of Film and Video

PN1995 .Q3 v.1 no.3

283 ROBERT SCHOLES
Narration and Narrativity in Film

297 GERALD MAST
Film History and Film Histories

315 DOUGLAS GOMERY
Problems in Film History: How Fox Innovated Sound

331 RAYMOND BELLOUR
To Analyze, To Segment

355 INDEX

QUARTERLY REVIEW OF FILM STUDIES is listed
in *Film Literature Index*.

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PART TWO OF

FILM: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THEORY AND TEACHING

WILL APPEAR IN **QRFS** VOL. 1, No. 4

ALAN WILLIAMS
Narrative Patterns in ONLY ANGELS HAVE WINGS

JUDITH MAYNE
KING KONG and the Ideology of Spectacle

SEYMOUR CHATMAN
Introducing Narratology to Film Students—via CITIZEN KANE

PAUL SHARITS
A Cinematics Model for Film Studies in Higher Education

DUDLEY ANDREW
Film and Power in American Universities

MARSHA KINDER
Establishing a Discipline for the Teaching of Film: Criticism and the Literary Analogue

DONALD SKOLLER
The "Plus": A Presentation on the Integration of Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Film

JAY RUBY
Anthropology and Film: The Social Science Implications of Regarding Film as Communication

CLAUDIA GORBMAN
Teaching the Soundtrack

VLADA PETRIC
For a Close Cinematic Analysis

THE CENTER FOR TWENTIETH CENTURY STUDIES

is a community of scholars in the humanities whose research focuses on ethnic studies, mass media (including film and video) and artistic alternatives to print culture. The Center organizes a theoretical symposium and conference on applications of its research each year. It is funded by the College of Letters and Science and by the School of Graduate Studies of

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN–MILWAUKEE

FOREWORD
Special Issue of Quarterly Review of Film Studies for the Center for 20th Century Film Studies

Michel Benamou

In 1975-76 the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee hosted two scholarly meetings on film related to research being done at the Center for 20th Century Studies. This double issue of *QRFS* offers a selection from the papers presented on these two occasions and thus makes permanent and widely available important aspects of the Center's efforts in the area of scholarly study of the most important art and one of the most potent social forces of the 20th Century.

While continuing its involvement in the arts of the written word, the Center for 20th Century Studies has included film in its research programs because cinema is an artistic and technological alternative to the print culture which has so long dominated the Western World. The year preceding our film project was similarly devoted to another, very different, alternative: tribal poetries and the theories about them,ethnopoetics. In 1976-77, moreover, our central concern will be live performance in all the arts. In this process of stretching the humanities to include oral traditions, film, and performance, many of the tools of conventional literary analysis and history will be re-examined, reshaped or even discarded. In the process, the concept of "text"—the traditional locus of humanistic attention—will inevitably be enriched.

As the papers which follow suggest, film reflects the whole spectrum of intellectual endeavor. (It should be noted, however, that several areas of that endeavor for reasons beyond our control do not appear in the present collection, even though they received consideration during the year and at these meetings. These include such important categories as Video Images, Third World Film, and Film and Women.) In a relatively

new scholarly field, such as film still is, there are necessarily limitations to method, knowledge, and perspective. But there are also unusual opportunities. In many ways, the nascent condition of film studies in this country is indeed a blessing in disguise. Coming at this historical moment, film scholarship will perhaps avoid both the sterile formalist analysis of the old "New Criticism" as well as the mere impressionism, moralism and historicism against which it was in reaction.

It is clear, in any event, that film criticism has developed a new idiom all its own. While linguists for over three thousand years have dealt with words without pictures, the semiotics of film adds another sign system to the significations words make in a piece of writing; art historians must adjust their lenses to accomodate movement in film styles, but then movement has always been latent in painting; critics of culture have found in film new phenomena of diffusion and mass psychology, but they also possess better records of distribution and public reception than do the sociologists of literature (even if these advantages are not yet fully reflected in the scholarship).

If the first part of the Center's research in 1975-76 dealt essentially with film theory and modes of criticism, pedagogical applications occupied part two. In the selected papers from the March 1976 National Conference on the Teaching of Film we find the reverberations of three questions which I think rather timely given the state of film education in the United States: What is the place of semiotics? How interdisciplinary are film programs? How can one integrate (from integer, a whole) making and studying film within specific programs? Several Center Fellows also took part in a most interesting panel on *King Kong*, thus illustrating interdisciplinary approaches to a single work. As part of our year-long attempt to create a dialectic between the practice of art and its teaching and study, several filmmakers were present as educators and addressed themselves to the advantages of setting up production departments including humanistic aspects of film study. But the interdepartmental film program as an alternative to departmentalization was also a solution seriously debated. Hovering toward practical applications, semiotics and close analysis captured much attention with varying degrees of approval.

The Center gratefully acknowledges the help of the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal Agency in Washington, D.C., whose matching funds permitted us to gather in November 1975 a three-day International Symposium on Film Theory and Practical Criticism which attracted five hundred participants to Milwaukee. Being no film scholar myself, I received a great deal of helpful advice from several advance planners of the Symposium,

among them Gerald O'Grady from Buffalo, David Bordwell from Madison, and Patricia Mellencamp on our campus. And of course I owe a great debt to the staff of the Center and to each of the following:

Ronald Gottesman, Senior Fellow
Douglas Gomery, Postdoctoral Fellow
Thierry Kuntzel, Research Associate
Judith Mayne, Postdoctoral Fellow

Professor Gottesman's leadership was, of course, crucial throughout. The multiplicity of approaches—from aesthetics to semiotic analysis—exemplified in the results of the 1975 Symposium attests to the fact that today the study of film is indeed multidisciplinary and eclectic. Without Ron's all-embracing faith in serious work from whatever methodology, the selection would not have been so varied.

The Center is also much beholden to Thierry Kuntzel and Stephén Heath who returned to Milwaukee with NEA support to provide an intensive pre-Conference seminar on semiotics in its psychoanalytic as well as ideological finalities. I particularly acknowledge their pioneering spirit.

The Center wishes to thank personally all of the contributors to this double issue of *The Quarterly Review of Film Studies* for releasing their copyright to us. To Stanley Wolf, publisher of *QRFS*, I am much obliged. for it is not so often that the dissemination of scholarly meetings runs so smoothly and quickly. But then film is taught by a young and dynamic group of people and it is a pleasure to respond to their impatience. And, since the Center will hold another Conference on Film, this time on Film, Video and Theatre with emphasis on performance, it will be an added pleasure to see many of the contributors and their readers gathered in Milwaukee again quite soon.

Michel Benamou
Director
Center for 20th Century Studies
University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

ON SCREEN, IN FRAME: FILM AND IDEOLOGY

Stephen Heath

I

Something changes between 22 March and 28 December 1895. Between the scientific presentation and the start of commercial exploitation, the screen is fixed in its definitive place. The spectators are no longer set on either side of a translucent screen but have been assigned their position in front of the image which unrolls before them—*cinema* begins.

There are any number of anecdotal items which might have their significance in this context—the Japanese audiences to whom it used to be necessary to explain the facts of projection prior to the showing of a film, the organization of shadow theatre in certain cultures where the screen divides the audience into two with only the men allowed to move freely from one side to the other, to go behind the screen (much of the significance of these items is in their non-Western reference)—but more immediately important here are the images of screen and position in Marx and Freud and what they have to suggest for a consideration of film and ideology.

In Marx, of course, it is precisely the description of ideology which runs into such terms: "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology, men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises from their historical life-processes just as the inversion of the retina does from their physical life-process. . . We begin with real, active men, and from their real life-process show the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms of the human brain also are necessary sublimates of men's material life-process, which can be empirically established and which is bound to material pre-

conditions. Morality, religion, metaphysics and other ideologies no longer retain therefore their appearance of autonomous existence. They have no history, no development. . . " (*The German Ideology*). Men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura—everything is projected in the darkened room but inverted. The conception is clear but difficult in the comparison with the camera obscura: the match between idea and model, as it were, makes the problem, shows the work to be done. As the individual faces the screen of ideology—the wall, the side of the machine onto which the image is projected—he or she sees a real image, in true, aligned, and him/herself in position with it, screened too, presented and represented. There is no turning round (or back) to reality as to a direct source of light, no putting the eye to a hole in another wall so as to see the world outside. Ideology arises from the historical life-processes taken up in it. The struggle is in reality which includes ideology as a real component of its presence, historical, social, and subjective. The model of the camera obscura stops on the screen, hypothesizes subject and reality in the simple figure of inversion at the very moment that it seeks to stress the relations of their production, a process that crosses subject and reality in ideology.

It is the process of the subject, its construction, that occupies Freud in the elaboration of psychoanalysis, and it is the displacement of the subject from a simple coherence of consciousness which leads to the introduction of terms of screen and position. Mental processes exist to begin with in an unconscious phase, only from which do they pass over into the conscious phase—"just as a photographic picture begins as a negative and only becomes a picture after being turned into a positive." Once the photographic comparison has been made, Freud faces the problem of the selection of the conscious "images" with a spatial picture, another image: "The impulses in the entrance hall of the unconscious are out of sight of the conscious, which is in the other room; to begin with they must remain unconscious. If they have already pushed their way forward to the threshold and have been turned back by the watchman, then they are inadmissible to consciousness; we speak of them as *repressed*. But even the impulses which the watchman has allowed to cross the threshold are not on that account necessarily conscious as well; they can only become so if they succeed in catching the eye of consciousness. We are therefore justified in calling this second room the system of the *preconscious*." (*Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*). The subject is no longer given in front of the screen of ideology but divided in the very process of its construction for that confrontation. The camera obscura becomes a series of chambers with nega-

tives and positives, movements and repressions, screenings for and from the eye of consciousness. The irony is that it is just this kind of image—there is a similar one five years earlier in the *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*—that is filmable in Freud, that attracted the attention of directors and producers from Goldwyn to Pabst. There is something absolutely right and wrong in Goldwyn's approach to Freud—something of the enormity of Laemmle greeting Eisenstein by asking whether Trotsky could manage to knock up a script for him, but more so—film and psychoanalysis joining and disjoining on the image, the subject, the reality of their positions.

Thus, already, we have a certain power of cinema: just after Marx, just before Freud (or contemporaneously with him), it furnishes another image, the Image ("The discovery of the universal language! " cries one spectator to his neighbor in the Grand Café), in movement and set firm on the screen. The images of Marx and Freud—camera obscura, photographic printing, the dark chambers which filter material to catch the eye of consciousness—bear exactly on the image, bear against the phantoms or the phantom of consciousness. Hence, these—their own—images are at once necessary and dangerous (witness Freud's reaction to the filming of the metaphors he proposes), explicit and complicit. It is this encounter of images, this crisis of complicity, that can guide us. Cinema brings historical materialism and psychoanalysis together in such a way that the consideration of film and ideology begins from and constantly returns us to their conjuncture, in such a way that from the analysis of cinema, of film, we may be able to engage with theoretical issues of a more general scope, issues crucial for a materialist analysis of ideological institutions and practices.

II

Let us start with the classic—"naive"—thesis, (often adopted as a version of "content analysis" by those who nonetheless refuse it). Film, a film, is precisely an image, the image of an image (of reality), the reproduction of existing representations: in short, a reflection. Since we have been occupied with beginnings, it may as well be said that this conception is that of Louis Lumière but taken one notch down. Instead of holding to a reproduction of life, ("The film subjects I chose are the proof that I only wished to reproduce life"), it holds to a reproduction of the image of life. Of Lumière one has the right to demand to know where this "life" comes from—and

the answer is certainly not from itself, for life is composed on the screen of work, family, and leisure, *La Sortie des ouvriers*, *Le Repas de bébé*, and *L'Arroseur arrosé*, chosen subjects indeed: of the reproduction thesis one has the right to demand to know where the image comes from and what it is doing in the film.

This last question is important, and first and foremost in that it prevents us from stopping at the image, at the idea of the image, obliges us to specify the *work* of ideology in the film, of the film in ideology, its production and productions, its multiple determinations (by what it is determined and what it determines). There is a Biograph film listed for 1902 (it may recall a scene in Godard's *Les Carabiniers*) entitled *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*: a "country bumpkin who becomes so overwhelmed by watching his first motion picture from a stage box that he tears down the screen in his enthusiasm to help the heroine of one of the films." Uncle Josh can see well enough that it is the screen that is at stake, but then he only sees its images (which he loves) and so misses it completely, passes through it. The image goes on, *continues* (doubtless the self-confirming force of the demonstration, the reason why it figures in the film and in films)—and at the very moment that Uncle Josh pulls away the screen or that the ideologist notes the illusion to lift it off as unreal. Uncle Josh should have turned, as we must turn, in the other direction: the need is to work out the screen, hollow in the image, examine the relations—the real relations—it sustains (produced and producing), what it sets up, the complex of representations, positions and movements, the machinery of cinema (and of film as cinema). The initial question is not "where is reality?" but, "how does this function?," "where is the reality *in that*?"

A second thesis here requires attention. In ideology, it is said, is represented the imaginary relation of individuals to the real relations under which they live. It has also to be stressed, however, that this imaginary relation in ideology is itself real, which means not simply that the individuals live it as such (the mode of illusion, the inverted image) but that it is effectively, practically, the reality of their concrete existence, the term of their subject positions, the basis of their activity, in a given social order. The imaginary is not just in ideology (it is in relations) and ideology is not just reducible to the imaginary (it is that real instance in which the imaginary is realized). What is held in ideology, what it forms, is the *unity* of the real relation and the imaginary relation between men and women and the real conditions of their existence. All of which is not to forget the economic instance nor to ideologize reality into the status of an impossible myth; rather, it is to bring out ideology in its reality and to indicate that reali-

ty—as against ideology, as its truth—is posed only in process in the specific contradictions of a particular sociohistorical moment.

Thus, ideology is to be seen as itself productive within a mode of production, taking the latter—Marx's *Produktionsweise*—to refer precisely in historical materialism to the articulation of the economic, political, and ideological instances; the ideological instance determines the definition, the reproduction, of individuals as agents/subjects for the mode of production, in the positions it assigns them. To acknowledge this is to recognize the materiality of ideology and to grasp analysis accordingly: ideology is not a kind of cloud of ideas hanging over the economic base and which analysis can "dispel" to reveal the coherent image of a simple truth, but a specific social reality given in a specific set of institutions (or "ideological state apparatuses"); to analyse an ideology involves its analysis in this existence within the dynamic of a mode of production. When Marx comments that ideologies "have no history," he means that their history is to be understood exactly in the analysis of the dynamic (the task of historical materialism) and not in some pure autonomy. At the same time, however, the recognition of the material existence and function of ideology demands—and this will be important for thinking about film—the understanding also of a certain historicity of ideological formations in relation to the processes of the production of subject-meanings (meanings for a subject included as the place of their intention), demands, in other words, the understanding of the *symbolic* as an order that is intersected but not resumed by the ideological (ideology works *over* the symbolic *on* the subject *for* the imaginary). A history of cinema could be envisaged in this perspective, which would be not that of the straight reflection of ideological representations, nor that of the simple autonomy of an ideality of forms, but, as it were, the history of the production of meaning assumed and established by cinema in specific relations of the individual to subjectivity.

There are one or two remarks which follow immediately from these initial emphases. Firstly, it must be seen that the notion of determination which has proved—or been made to prove—such a stumbling-block for ideological analysis cannot be conceived of as a problem in cause and effect with its answer an explanation from an absolute point of origin (as though, says Engels, historical materialism were to be "easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree"). Analysis will be concerned not with determinations in this mechanistic sense but with contradictions, it being in the movement of these contradictions that can be grasped the *set* of determinations—the "structural causality"—focused by a particular social fact, institution, or work. Secondly, inevitably, a broad conception is

emerging of what might be the *critical* role of art, of a practice of cinema, and in terms precisely of a production of contradictions against the fictions of stasis which contain and mask structuring work, in terms of a fracturation of the vision of representation to show, in Brecht's words, that "in things, men, processes, there is something that makes them what they are and at the same time something which makes them other." This last remark, which engages the very *edge* of the present paper, its constant horizon, leads, moreover, from the more general discussion of ideology to the necessity to consider the vision of cinema, the nature and the area of its intervention. What is the role of cinema in capitalist society as a point of investment and a form of representation and meaning production? What does it sell *on*? At what levels—how—does analysis need to operate?

III

The distinction can be made between industry, machine, and text. *Industry* refers to the direct economic system of cinema, the organization of the structure of production, distribution, and consumption. Studies have shown that such organization has, at least in Britain and America, by and large conformed to typical patterns of capitalist activity. The *text*, the film, is a particular product of that industry. Currency is occasionally given to the idea that the film industry is one of "prototypes," but it is clear that the optimal exploitation of the production apparatus, which ties up considerable amounts of capital, requires the containment of creative work within established frameworks and that genres, film kinds, even so-called studio styles, are crucial factors here. As for the *machine*, this is cinema itself seized exactly between industry and product as the stock of constraints and definitions from which film can be distinguished as *specific signifying practice*. That formulation in turn needs to be opened out a little. *Signifying* indicates the recognition of film as system or series of systems of meaning, film as articulation. *Practice* stresses the process of this articulation, which it thus refuses to hold under the assumption of notions such as "representation" and "expression;" it takes film as a work of production of meanings and in so doing brings into the analysis the constructions of the subject within that work, its inscription of the subject. *Specific* is the necessity for the analysis to understand film in the particularity of the work it engages, the difference of its conjuncture with other signifying practices. This last does not entail pulling film as specific signifying practice towards some aesthetic idea of a pure cinematicity (on

a line with the idea of "literarity" derived in literary criticism from Russian Formalism and often become a way of avoiding crucial issues of ideology in its appeal to a technicist "structuralist poetics"); specificity here is semiotic, and a semiotic analysis of film—of film as signifying practice—is the analysis of a heterogeneity, the range of codes and systems at work in the film text; specificity, that is, is at once those codes particular to cinema (codes of articulation, of sound and image, codes of scale of shot, certain codes of narrative disposition, etc.) *and* the heterogeneity in its particular effects, its particular inscriptions of subject and ideology, of the subject in ideology.

These effects of inscription are fundamental, the area of the intersection of film in ideology by industry and machine as institution of the subject, as institution of image and position, and their shifting regulation *on* the figure of the subject. The hypothesis, in short, is that an important—determining—part of ideological systems in a capitalist mode of production is the achievement of a number of machines (institutions) which move—which *movie*—the individual as subject—shifting and placing desire, the energy of contradiction—in a perpetual retotalisation of the imaginary. The individual is always a subject of ideology, but is always more than simply the figure of that representation (just as the social cannot be reduced to the ideological which is nevertheless the very form of its representation as society); what the machines undertake is the realignment of such excess—desire, contradiction, and negativity. As far as analysis is concerned, the hypothesis tends to suggest a kind of returning movement, whereby the industy is to be grasped (in terms of "film and ideology") from the point of the ideological determination of the institution-machine and the latter from the point of its textual effects. In fact, of course, this complexity—this *complex*—may be broken by analysis into its own levels of contradiction: each film is specific in the ideological operation of its text *and* in its operation of the ideological specificity of film. The aim now must be to sketch something of these limits as the necessary focus for critical—creative—resistance.

To focus limits, in other words, is not to declare cinema by nature reactionary but to attempt to dialectically exploit comprehension in the interests of a demonstration/transformation of the cinematic institution in its ideological effects. Yet the difficulties should be remembered and they can be seen by considering for a moment the example of Brecht. It is the question of limits that occupies Brecht in his thinking on cinema; the terms of his assessment alter, but in Hollywood he comes to regard cinema as inevitably regressive (identificational) insofar as it cuts off the

spectator from production, from performance: "the public no longer has any opportunity to modify the actor's performance; it is confronted not with a production but with the result of a production, produced in its absence." This "fundamental reproach" gains in intensity in the light of the *fundamental* importance attached by Brecht in his theatrical practice to the *Lehrstuck* (and not finally to the epic theatre play) as "model for the theatre of the future": the purpose of the *Lehrstuck*, the "learning-play" (Brecht's own preferred translation), is "to show a politically wrong mode of behaviour and hence to teach a correct mode of behaviour," the realization of such a purpose lying "in the fact that it is acted, not in the fact that it is seen"; "it completely transforms the role of acting; it suppresses the system actor/spectator, knows only actors who are at the same time apprentices"; as model for the future, the *Lehrstuck* is thus, in fact, a kind of school of dialectics. Nothing of the sort in film: cinema as art of the product, the public screened from production, fixed in the image. Brecht poses the problem, the difficulties, precisely with regard to subject-position and the implication of cinema in a founding ideology of vision as knowledge, the specularization of reality for the coherence of a subject outside contradiction; the assessment, the reproach, follows from that relation.

IV

What are the terms of this relation of vision? Those of a *memory*, the constant movement of a retention of the individual as subject, framed and narrated.

The screen is the projection of the film frame which it holds and grounds (hence the urgency of the need to fix the position, to forbid the other side). It is not by chance that the word "frame"—which etymologically means "to advance," "to further," "to gain ground"—should emerge from painting to describe the material unit of the film ("the single transparent photograph in a series of such photographs printed on a length of cinematographic film," "twenty-four frames a second") and that it should then be used to talk about the image in its setting, the delimitation of the image on screen (in Arnheim, for instance, "frame" and "delimitation" are synonymous), as well as to provide an expression for the passage of the film in the projector relative to the aperture—"in frame"—and for the camera view point, "framing" and "reframing." In an Eisenstein, moreover, there is a veritable aesthetics of the staging of the frame, of *mise en*

cadre ("Just as *mise en scène* will be taken to mean the placing of elements, temporally and spatially, on the theatre stage, so we will call *mise en cadre* the placing of these elements in the shot").

It is the differences in frame between film and painting that are generally emphasized: film is limited to a standard screen ratio (the three to four horizontal rectangle) or, as now, to a number of such ratios (Eisenstein in Hollywood proposes a square screen which would permit the creation of rectangles of any proportion by the use of masks); film destroys the ordinary laws of pictorial composition because of its moving human figures which capture attention against all else. In his essay on "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin has a comparison of film and painting which develops their incompatibility in this way from the position of the spectator: "The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested. . . The spectator's process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant sudden change." There is much there that would call for comment (the comparison stems from the initial valuation of cinema by Brecht and Benjamin as a new mode of organizing and defining artistic production and, in fact, as a potentially epic mode—a conception that the *Threepenny Opera* lawsuit had begun to call into question even before Benjamin's essay was written): what needs to be stressed here, however, is the insistence of the frame which stays in view throughout the comparison, in place, the constant screen. The same constancy (or consistency) carries over to the other classic comparison, that of film and theatre. Where the stage has "wings," fixed limits, the screen in this comparison is said to be lacking in any frame, to know only the implied continuation of the reality of the image. Thus Bazin will write: "The screen is not a frame like that of a picture, but a mask which allows us to see a part of the event only. When a person leaves the field of the camera, we recognise that he or she is out of the field of vision, though continuing to exist identically in another part of the scene which is hidden from us. The screen has no wings. . ." Once again, however, the frame simply stays put, transposed as the field of vision of the camera, and there is no necessity to emphasize the importance of what Vertov calls "theatrical cinema" (not least in Bazin with his consecration of the deep focus scene in the films of a Welles or a Wyler). Moreover, the illimitation which the theatre comparison seeks to stress is exactly the confirmation of the power of the frame, its definition as a "view" that has ceaselessly to

counter absence by the assertion of the coherence of its presence, its "being-in-frame."

In frame: the place of image and subject, view (in early French catalogues a film is called a *vue*) and viewer; frame, framing, is the very basis of disposition—German *Einstellung*: adjustment, centering, framing, moral attitude, the correct position. Nijny reports a remark of Eisenstein's to the effect that metaphor is often the key to solutions of problems in *mise en cadre*; what can be added is that the frame itself is the constant metaphor, the transfer—the *met, phora*—of center and eye (the early circular masks, shaped mattes, etc., are so many signs of this veritable drama of the centered eye—a film like *Grandma's Reading Glass* still has its lessons, its resonances).

The stake of the frame is clear (it is this that is finally crucial in Marx's camera obscura, not the inversion): the frame is the reconstitution of the scene of the signifier, of the symbolic, into that of the signified, the passage through the image from other scene to seen; it ensures distance as correct position, the summit of the eye, *representation*; it redresses (here, paradoxically, is the inversion) reality and meaning, is the point of their match. Analysis must then begin (and much has been done in this field) to examine the history, the techniques, the movements, of the alignment of cinema-eye and human-eye and subject-eye (where Vertov wished to give the disalignment, the difference of the first two in order to displace the subject-eye of the individual into an operative—transforming—relation to reality), must trace the windowing identity of subject and camera, the setting of the gaze to accompany the play of "point of view" between characters in the diegetic space of the film (always the drama of the eye) which organizes the images in the coherence of the fiction.

The fiction, the view, of the characters—the human figures who enter film from the very first, as though of right, spilling out of the train at La Ciotat, leaving the Lyons factory or the photographic congress (is the fascination with people "arriving" in film simply coincidental?) and who can only be evacuated with great difficulty, in certain modern "experimental" films—encloses the film as narrative, establishes that diegetic space. Specifying cinema-the-machine as mode of communication at the start of *Langage et cinéma*, Metz comments that it has "no particular sector of meaning (no portion of the matter of content in Hjelmslevian terms)." Yet narrative is there immediately in film, in cinema, to lay out the images, to support the frame against its excess, to suggest laws to hold the movement, to ensure continuity, to *be* "cinematic form" (thus, for Lawson, "The total rejection of a story, and the accompanying denial of

syntax or arrangement, can only lead to the breakdown of cinematic form."). In the intermittence of its images (Benjamin's "constant sudden change"), film is a perpetual metonymy over which narrative lays as a model of closure, a kind of conversion of desire (metonymy is the figure of desire in psychoanalytic theory) into the *direction* of the subject through the image-flow (representation, the positioning of the subject, is as much a fact of the organization of the images as of the fact of the image itself).

Narrative, that is, may be seen as a decisive instance of framing in film (the determining links between narrative constraint and conventions of framing have often been stressed): its economy—a relation of transformation between two homogeneities ("beginning" and "end") in which the second is the replacement of the first, a reinvestment of its elements—*checks* the images, centering and containing, prescribing a reading as correlation of actions and inscribing a subject as, and for, the coherence of that operation, carried through against possible dispersion, the multiple intensities of the text of the film. Frame, narrative placing, subject inscription cut short the interminable movement of the signifier, impose—subject-in-position, on screen, in frame—precisely the continuousness of representation.

V

The narrative elision of the image flow, the screening of point of view as the ground of the image, the totalizing of image and space in the frame of field/reverse field—these are some of the procedures that have been described in terms of *suture*, a stitching or tying as in the surgical joining of the lips of a wound. In its process, its framings, its cuts, its intermittences, the film ceaselessly poses an absence, a lack, which is ceaselessly bound up in and into the relation of the subject, is, as it were, ceaselessly recaptured *for* the film. Formulated thus, the description is both important—since it can bring us round again to the articulation of film and ideology on the figure of the subject—and inadequate—since it misses, or masks, a functioning which may perhaps have implications for thinking that articulation.

In psychoanalysis, "suture" names the relation of the individual-as-subject to the chain of its discourse where it figures missing in the guise of a stand-in (its place is taken and it takes that place); the subject is an effect of the signifier in which it is represented, stood in for. Ideological repre-

sentation depends on—supports itself from—this "initial" production of the subject in the symbolic (hence the crucial role of psychoanalysis, as prospective science of the construction of the subject, within historical materialism), directs it as a set of images or inversions, of *fixed* positions, metonymy stopped in coherence. What must be emphasized, however, is that the stopping—the functioning of the suture in imaginary, frame, narrative, etc.—is exactly a *process*: it counters a productivity, an excess, that it states and restates in the very moment of rejection in the interests of coherence—thus the film frame, for example, mined from within by the outside it delimits and poses and has ceaselessly to recontain. The process never ends, the construction-reconstruction has always to be restarted: the machines, cinema included, are there for that. Ideology is *in* the suture.

Coming back to cinema, moreover, it can be seen that in a sense the cinematographic apparatus itself is nothing but an operation of suture. To cross the coherence of a patient's discourse in the analytic situation at the point of its process of suture (the point of construction and hence of exposure, of weakest resistance) is to grasp "the structure of the subject articulated as a 'flickering of eclipses,' like the movement that opens and closes number, delivering the lack in the form of the one to abolish it in its successor." The description has all the echoes of Boully's patent of 1892 with its "*mouvement saccade*": "The movement of the strip in the apparatus is jerky; that is to say, it is immobile for the time sufficient to register the image and mobile while the shutter closes the access of light." The images registered in their continuity as differences are then placed in another apparatus for reproduction in that continuity by a similar mechanism on the basis of these very differences. All in all, from machine to film with its own tie procedures, cinema develops as the apparatus of a formidable memory, the tracing of a subject defined, to quote the psychoanalytic account of suture once again, "by attributes the other side of which is political, disposing as of powers of a faculty of memory necessary to close the collection without loss of interchangeable elements." Or, as Godard put it more succinctly, "je pense, donc le cinéma existe."

It is here that the hypothesis of machines for the shifting regulation of the individual-as-subject can be specified. The imaginary—the stand-in, the sutured coherence, the fiction of anticipated totality—functions over and against the symbolic, the order of language, the production of meanings, within which the subject is set as the place of an endless movement (identity as a function of repeated difference) and from which, precisely, there

is image and desire and suture. The subject thus placed supports and is supported by ideological formations as the prospect—the perspective—of desire, its images. The "attributes" of construction described by psychoanalysis are at once formal and "political" (ideological)—"the other side," like the recto and verso of a piece of paper. The individual as subject is simultaneously a subject-support, and the images of the one are the terms of the other's representation. Cinema, with its screen, its frames, its binding memory, is perhaps *the* image machine; not because it is the "good object" (conditioned by the desire exposed in the symbolic, the energy of division, the imaginary is not to be equated with the "good object" in a straight Kleinian sense), but because it holds the subject—on screen, in frame—in the exact turning of symbolic and suture, negativity and coherence, flow and image (the "screen" as it figures in various Lacanian diagrams has a similar kind of ambivalence, locus of a potentially lucid relation between the subject and its imaginary captation and the sign of the barrier—the slide—across subject and object of desire).

Which is why care is needed with such received ideas as that of a simple commitment in the mainstream development of cinema to the effacement of the marks of cinematic practice in favor of a transparent presentation of "reality" (cinema—"the art of the real"). Continuity, invisible editing, matches, and so on are important (indeed, they have here been stressed) but there is a sense in which the point of cinema was always this very process itself. D. W. Griffith will furnish an emblematic example. We know that, along with others of his time, he was apparently opposed to pans on the grounds that they showed up the mechanics of film (there are films where pans have been truncated in the editing as soon as they begin); we also know that in 1913 Griffith took a full page in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* to announce the break with Biograph, ostentatiously listing his claimed inventions—"the large or close-up figures, distant views as represented first in *Ramona*, the 'switch-back,' sustained suspense, the 'fade-out' and restraint in expression" (*Biograph Bulletin* entries often drew attention to striking innovations or filmic achievements). The conjuncture of the two facts gives something of the feel: the displayed jubilation in the "modern techniques of the art" and the limits of that display, and then the realization anyway of those techniques (as in the Griffith list) as procedures of suture. The display differs, the balance varies (from the outset almost the problem is the variation of the limits); genres are instances of equilibrium, characteristic relatings—specific relations—of subject and machine in film as particular closures of desire, forms of pleasure (the other factor in a

double determination, conjoining with the need for industrial optimalisation mentioned earlier); what is constant is film as narration of subject and desire.

VI

Constant narration, different narratives: each text has its particular operation, its particular ideological intersections, its constancies and differences, its terms and their reworking of limits. The analysis in the text of film and system is always imperative, the premise of any consideration of film, of a film, in its specific signifying practise.

The limits sketched out here have done no more than to envisage the ideological place of cinema as an aid to such a consideration and as a response to a Brechtian principle: "For as long as one does not criticize the social function of cinema, all film criticism is only a criticism of symptoms and has itself a merely symptomatic character." Is this to come back finally to the "fundamental reproach?" Yes, perhaps, but displaced a little in its working out, the beginnings of a comprehension to exploit. The problem, the political problem, for film in its intervention can be given as the transformation of the relations of subjectivity and ideology. Question of limits: open within the limits—film as theoretical fiction, sociological experiment, learning play, history lesson—the other scene, another memory, a new subject, in process, transforming. Once again, Brecht has outlined the term and the task:

> "All the productivity of men is not contained in the actual production, which is always limited. Those elements that are not entirely absorbed into it, however, do not simply fall outside, they contradict; they are not simply lacking in meaning, they disturb. Thus only a very attentive scheme will be able to grasp their activity, and you need an ear which is extremely sensitive to what is productive. It is a real achievement to keep these elements from destruction, that is, from destroying and being destroyed.

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Note

This paper has been left in the form in which it was delivered; as the opening address, its aim was to suggest the problems involved in the analysis of film and ideology and, in so doing, to touch on a number of issues raised by the various sections

into which the Symposium was divided (narration, history, semiotics, etc.).

The overall context of the piece, and at every moment, is work done in the journal *Screen* over the last few years. The initial consideration of ideology starts from points developed by Louis Althusser: *Pour Marx*, Paris 1965 (trans. *For Marx*, London 1969); "Ideologie et appareils ideologiques d' etat," *La Pensée*, June 1970 (trans. "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London 1972). Quotations concerning the psychoanalytic concept of suture come from: Jacques-Alain Miller, "La suture," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* No. 1, Paris 1966; itself stemming from the teaching of Jacques Lacan: *Ecrits*, Paris 1966, and *Le Séminaire*, Paris 1973 (3 volumes so far). Translation of the concept into film theory was undertaken by Jean-Pierre Oudart: "La suture," *Cahiers du cinéma* No. 211, April 1969; this article then being utilized in English by Daniel Dayan: "The tutor-code of classical American cinema," *Film Quarterly* Vol. XXVIII No. 1, 1974. Brecht's writings on cinema are to be found in: *Gessammelte Werke* Vol. XVIII, Frankfurt 1967. Much help was derived from Christian Metz: *Langage et cinéma*, Paris 1971, (trans. *Language and Cinema*, The Hague 1974); "Le significant imaginaire," *Communications* No. 23, 1975 (trans. "The imaginary signifier," *Screen* Vol. 16 No. 2, 1975). Finally, an unpublished paper by Jackie Rose on "The imaginary—the insufficient signifier," and discussion of that paper at a British Film Institute (Educational Advisory Service) seminar, contributed a great deal to the formulation of certain ideas.

A NOTE UPON THE FILMIC APPARATUS*

Thierry Kuntzel

1925. "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'": Freud, abandoning the neuronic and optic models, accounts for the functioning of the psychic apparatus by referring to a writing mechanism.

Writing-memory, 1: *I can choose a writing-surface which will preserve intact any note made upon it for an indefinite period of time—for instance, a sheet of paper which I can write upon in ink. I am then in possession of a "permanent memory trace." The disadvantage of this procedure is that the receptive capacity of the writing-surface is soon exhausted. The sheet is filled with writing, there is no more room on it for any more notes, and I find myself obliged to bring another sheet into use, that has not been written on.*

Writing-memory, 2: *If I write with a piece of chalk on a slate, I have a receptive surface which retains its receptive capacity for an unlimited time and the notes upon it which can be destroyed as soon as they*

*1975. This text was presented in a slightly different form and under the title, "Film, a Mystic Writing-Pad" at the Symposium on Film Theory and Practical Criticism. It was used at that time to introduce a textual analysis of a fragment from *La Jetee* by Chris Marker. In becoming this 'Note,' it must be considered a reprise, a displacement, a redistribution, a plagiarism of Freud's essay: the numerous quotes will be indicated simply in italics. Appreciation for their assistance: Maureen Turim, Randall Coleman, and Alan Williams.

cease to interest me, without any need for throwing away the writing-surface itself. Here the disadvantage is that I cannot preserve a permanent trace. If I want to put some fresh notes on the slate, I must first wipe out the ones which cover it.

Writing-memory, 3: Permanent traces and unlimited receptive capacity, incompatible in the two preceding writing devices, are united in an instrument which appeared in Freud's time: the Mystic Writing-Pad.

The Mystic Pad is a slab of dark brown resin or wax with a paper edging; over the slab is laid a thin transparent sheet, the top end of which is firmly secured to the slab while its bottom end rests on it without being fixed to it. This transparent sheet...consists of two layers, which can be detached from each other except at their two ends. The upper layer is a transparent piece of celluloid; the lower layer is made of thin translucent waxed paper. When the apparatus is not in use, the lower surface of the waxed paper adheres lightly to the upper surface of the wax slab.

To make use of the Mystic Pad, one writes upon the celluloid portion of the covering-sheet which rests on the wax slab. For this purpose no pencil or chalk is necessary, since the writing does not depend on material being deposited on the receptive surface. It is a return to the ancient method of writing on tablets of clay or wax: a pointed stylus scratches the surface, the depressions upon which constitute the "writing."...

If we lift the entire covering-sheet—both the celluloid and the waxed paper—off the wax slab, the writing vanishes and...does not reappear again. The surface of the Mystic Pad is clear of writing and once more capable of receiving impressions. But it is easy to discover that the permanent trace of what was written is retained upon the wax slab itself and is legible in suitable lights. Thus the Pad provides not only a receptive surface that can be used over and over again, like a slate, but also permanent traces of what has been written, like an ordinary pad: it solves the problem of combining the two functions BY DIVIDING THEM BETWEEN THE SEPARATE BUT INTERRELATED COMPONENT PARTS OR SYSTEMS. But this is precisely the way in which...our mental apparatus performs its perceptual function. The layer which receives the stimuli—the system Perception-Consciousness—forms no permanent traces; the foundations of memory come about in other, adjoining, systems.

The Mystic Writing-Pad seems to be a perfect model for the psychic apparatus. Perfect, with two reservations: it cannot reproduce the writing af-

ter it is erased—*it would be a mystic pad indeed if, like our memory, it could accomplish that*—and above all, it lacks movement: *if we imagine one hand writing upon the surface of the Mystic Writing-Pad while another periodically raises its covering sheet from the wax slab, we shall have a concrete representation of the way I tried to picture the functioning of our mind.*

1925. Freud—in a letter to Abraham dated the 9th of June—refuses to authorize a film on psychoanalysis, showing once more his misgivings about the cinema: *My chief objection is still that I do not believe that satisfactory plastic representation of our abstractions is at all possible.* A film on psychoanalysis, a plastic representation: Freud limits his consideration of the cinema to narrative-representative terms. But it is the underside of the cinema that could have interested Freud: in the functioning of the machine itself.

1925. For thirty years—since 1895 (the first Lumière exhibitions)—the "truly magic apparatus" which Freud sought had already existed: the filmic apparatus.

Pretend, then, that this apparatus has never been seen (in any case, could it ever be seen *completely*?). Imagine the pleasure that Freud finds in working the instrument—marking, erasing, rediscovering the traces in the wax under an oblique light—and notating it with New Novel-like precision. Pleasure: one apparatus the metaphor for the other.

The filmic apparatus is composed of a plane surface and a strip of film. The surface—the screen—is uniformly white regardless of its composition (cotton, asbestos, rubber, metal). The film strip is composed of two layers: the transparent base (the shiny side) and the emulsion (the dull side). The strip, wound off a reel, appears as a succession of rectangular photographs of the same size (the frames) separated by thin horizontal bars.

In use, the film moves along a path through the projector. An opening in the path (the aperture) frames the image and directs a light beam through it. The light projects the image, greatly enlarged, through a lens onto the screen. One only needs to extinguish the projector lamp so that the surface is clear of writing and it is again capable of receiving new impressions.

The most astonishing characteristic of this apparatus resides in its movement. A transporting mechanism allows the frames to slip through the film path—passing the aperture—at the rate of twenty-four frames per second. In projection, everything happens as if it were inscribed and erased on the screen without stop: in the operation of the Mystic Writing Pad, one hand would raise the covering-sheet periodically while the other would write upon the surface.

The writing disappears at the instant it appears and does not cease vanishing until, at the end of projection, the screen returns to its initial whiteness. The writing remains elsewhere as permanent traces: it is conserved on the film strip, capable of reappearing when the strip is reinserted in the projector's path.

The filmic apparatus thus provides not only a receptive surface that can be used over and over again like the slate, as well as permanent traces of the inscription, like an ordinary writing pad, and the combination of the two functions by dividing them between two separate but interrelated parts as in the Mystic Writing-Pad (the screen serving as the covering-sheet, the celluloid, as the wax), but also a speed of writing and an ability to make the vanished traces reappear. The two latter qualities were lacking in the Mystic Writing-Pad.

What use is made of this apparatus by the classic narrative, representational cinema? The latter rules the former by a series of codes, of which the code of movement constitutes the foundation.

Code of movement: this is the one that operates within the shot, perceived on the screen as a continuous and mobile whole, although materially it is defined, on the film stock, as a series of fixed and immobile frames. It is a code insofar as the speed (of filming and in projection) is regulated to produce the illusion of real movement—neither too slow nor too fast and above all without jumps or gaps.

Editing code: from one shot to the next an effect of homogeneity of what is represented is created by spatial and/or temporal unification according to certain rules—establishing shot, different kinds of matching, repetition of framing, and aural continuity.

Narrative codes: from beginning to end a film advances from one sequence to the next according to a temporal axis, from a question to its answer, from a conflict to its resolution, from one action to the next most often according to principles of verisimilitude (causality).

These codes, which prop up one another and which proceed from a technological code, serve the same purpose—they produce a linking, a certain screen-effect. That is, they make the spectator forget the material conditions that generate the projected film (moreover, the projector is, as Jean-Louis Baudry remarked, hidden behind the spectator) to the advantage of the represented and the narrated, as if the film were happening on or through (according to the myth of the open window) the screen.

On the screen of the classic narrative—representational cinema—appearing and erasing do not cease. It is a property of the apparatus to permit this writing in motion, but not in an erratic order. Each inscription is prepared by the preceding one and paves the way for the next (without taking into account long-term determinations due to narrative organization). Thus the screen offers my perception-consciousness system a flowing spectacle, without surprise (if surprise exists, it is the effect of a narrative subcode where it is fundamentally expected), receivable, comprehensible.

To return to the model of the Mystic Pad and to its improvement by the filmic apparatus: taking the analogy literally, if I connect the psychic apparatus with the filmic one, I obtain two mechanisms mirroring each other.

Mechanism of projection, mechanism of perception, and of its disappearance: *cathectic innervations are sent out and withdrawn in rapid periodic impulses from within into the completely pervious system perception-consciousness. So long as that system is cathected in this manner, it receives perceptions (which are accompanied by consciousness) and passes the excitation on to the unconscious mnemic systems; but as soon as the cathexis is withdrawn, consciousness is extinguished and the functioning of the system comes to a standstill.*

One more twist in this theoretical fiction and the passage from celluloid strip to projected film is defined by the same technical terms used by Freud (in the translation of the *Standard Edition*) to speak about the discontinuous functioning of the perception consciousness system: a *flicker* (a flash mechanism popular in experimental cinema): *I do not think it is too far-fetched to compare... the appearance and disappearance*

of the writing with the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception.

Another twist: while the perception-consciousness system is submitted to this screen-effect, could the unconscious grasp another space, another time, another logic—the film stock to which it is structurally close? A frame in the film stock: "invisible" in the projected film, not registered consciously has an effect elsewhere, unconsciously.

Discontinuity, flicker, subliminal image: these striking examples of functional analogies draw together the psychic apparatus and the filmic apparatus conceived according to the category of succession: fragmented succession in the strip, linked succession in the projection.

Thus the model of the pad permits a final turn of the screw. The film stock—thus named, provisionally, to compare it to and differentiate it from what is commonly called film—must be considered not only in its material form, a succession of audio-visual signs arranged on an axis—to use an image, the celluloid ribbon laid out flat. Rather, it is a virtual film, the film-beneath-the-film, *the other film*. This other film—to use another image: the strip rolled back up again on a reel, a volume, a film free from temporal constraints—where all the elements would be present at the same time, i.e., without any effect of presence, but constantly referring to each other: intersecting, overlapping, regrouping in configurations "never" seen or heard in the order of unreeling. At last, a film text.

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Note: The relationships between the other film and the unconscious logic will be the topic of the continuation of this article which will appear under the title, "The Other Film."

FACTS ABOUT FILMS AND FACTS OF FILMS

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

Film study is often divided into three aspects: history, criticism, and theory (or aesthetics). History is supposed to deal with facts; theory with concepts; and criticism (according to the way you look at it) with both or with neither. When criticism displays any taste for factual statement it tends to be assimilated into historical writings (contemporary or self-writing history in the case of the criticism of current films, otherwise historical history), while insofar as criticism shows itself to be conceptually regulated and explicit in its use of its own concepts, it is most often seen as an application of theory. Criticism can be envisaged in other ways—for example as an autonomous discipline of textual reading, or alternatively as an ideological practice which can be studied historically as part of the history of ideologies—but the more common habit is to place it in a limbo of uncertainty between the relative certainties and rigours of theory and history.

If criticism seems on the one hand to fall between two stools, being neither theory nor history, neither about facts nor about concepts, it does also lay claim to a distinction of its own: its status as humanism. Criticism is the point of encounter between man as subject and a world made in the image of man. Too much rigour, too much factuality would destroy the poignancy of this encounter. Criticism is a bastion of the free spirit defending itself against the imperialism of science. And insofar as there exists a widespread nostalgia for the free spirit, criticism as nonscience can be expected to survive for a while yet.

It is my firm conviction that criticism in this humanistic sense needs to be subjected to the corrosive action of criticism in another sense: to be subjected to critique. I cannot here go into all the reasons why I think this to be necessary. What I want to focus on is a question, thrown, up, almost accidentally, it might appear, by the critique of criticism—the role played

in the problematic (as I suppose it has to be called) by the inadequacies of current conceptions of film history, or rather film historiography.

If criticism has a distinct object as well as a distinct method, this object must surely be style. Within the current academic and journalistic division of labor it is the world of style which is not seen as amenable to factual or scientific treatment and which can therefore be grasped, if at all, only in the context of the unique, hand-to-hand encounter of the responding subject and the filmic world in which is objectified that other subject, the author. Style is personal je ne sais quoi which distinguishes the work from just the sum of its referential contents on the one hand and the sum of its profilmic events on the other. The contents have a history—the history of themes and their treatment, and of the societies that generate these themes. The profilmic events have a history too—the history of film technology, the history of the industry, the history of filmmakers and of the making of films. But there is a point at which these two sets of histories fail to come together. I would designate this point as style. It is commonly seen as the point at which there is nothing to be said or no way of saying anything except via an aesthetics of personal response.

The thesis I want to advance here is that this zero point—the point that historians cannot or will not treat and prefer to leave in the limbo of personal subjective inspirational response—is just as amenable to historical treatment as the others (as well as being also the proper ground for theory). History claims to concern itself with facts. Its raison d'etre is indeed the belief that the past can be dismembered and put together again in factual form. (Theory also has to do with facts, though in a different way.) In my opinion, there is also such a thing as the fact of style, and within the context of this fact there are stylistic facts, which are as amenable to investigation as facts of any other kind. The question therefore arises, Why has historiography on the whole abstained from dealing with these facts?

One answer could be the ideological one already suggested. There is a resistance in our culture to pushing scientific analysis too far into the intimate world of that which engages us emotionally. This resistance is particularly strong in the case of movies, which are, after all, precisely a refuge from the pressures of a dehumanising freedom-denying world. But a reason of a different order can be found in historiography itself. Even if we did not want to preserve the area and defend it tooth and nail against scientific encroachment, it is doubtful if film historiography as presently constituted would be capable of capturing it even without opposition—and even with the help of a motley crew of allies from the behavioral sciences (sic).

The historiography practiced by most film historians, which has lost, if

it ever had, the pretensions of Michelet or even Ranke and has not yet acquired those of the "Annales" school, tends to be event history rather than structure history. That is to say it traces events in their succession, hoping to elicit cause-and-effect patterns from the sequence of events. Failing that, it is always capable of falling back on chronological sequence itself. It is a history of influences in which a film made and released in 1928 might perhaps be held to have influenced a film made and released in 1929 but, if no influence can be proven, can still be placed in chronological sequence before the later film. It is also, or aspires to be, a history of cause-and-effect determinations between one level and another, these determinations again being linear, like chronological ones. Just as a film of 1929 cannot cause a film of 1928 but only (if anything) vice versa, so the Depression can be held to cause the films of the Depression but hardly, in elementary logic, the other way around.

This form of history writing is adequate, if not excellent, for tracing the history of profilmic events. With profilmic events (and even profilmic structures) we are dealing with facts that can be recounted in succession, and can also manage transitions from general cause (level of investment, state of technological and intellectual climate) to supposed particular effects (what X filmmaker did in a film that had never been done before). The problem comes in the move from the profilmic to the actual filmic and in discussing the internal relations of filmic systems themselves. Since filmic facts (facts of style) are seen as particular and individual, products of (and chronologically posterior to) the profilmic processes, the connections between them get traced by a constant re-recourse to the profilmic. In brief, only profilmic events have a history. The rest is ineffable.

By contrast the writing of structural history (the term is not a new one, and long predates the vogue for "structuralism" in the late sixties) allows a place for the stylistic fact within the overall context of determinations. To say this is not to succumb to any idealist notion of the domination of the mental over the material, because we can and should remain within the materialist framework of determination in the last instance. But it is no longer a question of tracing the individual determinations which eventually become manifest as an event of a film (or rather, as the last stage of the profilmic event). Rather it is a question of saying that films—film texts and filmic systems—have their own history and that this history can then be written into the overall history with which historians endeavour to come to terms.

The question then arises of the sense in which we are in fact talking about history at all. Films do not cause other films, at least not in the

sense of unwinding themselves off their reels and going off and generating other celluloid images by virgin birth or even other more traditional means of conception. Nor do they even do this indirectly, in the sense of the existence of one film in one place causing a filmmaker elsewhere to make a film in a way conditioned by the preexistence of the first one. But to point out this obvious fact is merely to say that structural history does not necessarily have to deal with things diachronically and with causes and effects as befores and afters. The history of filmic systems is not diachronic, but one of successive synchronies of the state of the art, and this state of the art is in movement. It does change. But the way it is approached is in the first instance synchronic. Any set of profilmic events in the widest sense—all the things that have to be done in order to make a film—inserts itself into a system of filmic representations as it exists at a particular point in time, while being itself conditioned, not by the system as a whole in every minute detail, but generally by the limits of possibility of the system actually known to the filmmakers. The stylistic properties of each film, therefore, are not exclusively determined at the level of the profilmic facts, but by the possibility of their insertion into the set of relations governing filmic representation and capable of assigning value to the various elements. That the system is hard to pin down—Is it out there? Is it in the head?—is no barrier to recognising that it functions, and functions within history. The same could be said of the concept of the mode of production in Marx. Where is the mode of production? In what way does it exist in a world in which its existence is opaque to its participants? Those particular questions are not the ones that need to be asked either to confirm or to deny its historical reality.

To sum up. The facts of style can and must be rescued from the velleities of so called criticism and reinserted into history. But this can only be done by constructing the system of these facts and writing history in such a way that the effects of this system can be inscribed into the area of those other systems and apparatuses whose history has already begun to be written. And a final question: Does this historiographical project eliminate everything to do with the subject and living breathing persons? Answer: No, it does not. It just displaces it elsewhere. It threatens critics, not people.

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith writes on film from London.

NON-LINGUISTIC EXTENSIONS OF FILM AND VIDEO

Tony Conrad

For a field with such a long and distinguished contact with scientific and technological innovation as photography, *experimentation* would seem to be an ennobling preoccupation. The names and work of such diverse father figures as Herschel, Maxwell, Muybridge, Lumière, Edison, Kuleshov, etc. command our tongues when we think of artistic expression as "experimental"; in *fact*, 'experimental' is a word more suitable in describing instrumentation and recording activities than even the kind of tentative "test film" made by Duchamp and Ray (which of course didn't even last through the processing). But I'm not trying to whine about our peculiar taxonomical inheritance, manifested in the term 'experimental film': I'm more interested in pointing out the *critical* deficiencies which have let this kind of blunder subvert our discourse so repeatedly, while other artists fall easily into place in the continuum of 20th century discourse.

What are the conditions of film and video which have encouraged this peculiar insularity, and how can we best take advantage of it? Certainly one tactical difficulty has been the position of film as a stopping-off point on the way between theater and painting. Standing between two dominating forms is a tricky act. Artists with one foot in video and one foot in film are exposed to this same strategic difficulty, in miniature. The artist's work may be either indecisive or vigorous and meaningful, but the critical language it stimulates will in any case be divided and contrary. On the other hand, after the artist overcomes that initial feeling of being baited, and of needing to justify the forms used, unprecedented opportunities may emerge for extending the dialectic of this situation into a general transformation of the artistic surroundings.

As this begins to look like groundwork for the erection of a broad article of faith, it is certainly prudent to pause and consider very particularly the peculiarities of film or video which might support such an investment. It should be possible to identify a number of items of consensus which could characterize the activities and materials typically associated with the most probing work in the fields we would like to consider.

1. Film, video, and photography participate in a generative function which I have become used to calling 'light recording.' "Light recording" also has to include much of reprography and printmaking; our perception of the definitional limitations of this term in these other areas helps to show us more clearly just where the essential bond to the recording of light may terminate within film or video.
2. Film and video depend upon translational systems of visual examination. For example, film *could* be defined as the intermittent and sequential examination of minute elements of a work, and video as the coding of multidimensional information in a one-dimensional system. Painters long ago realized that the mechanism of examination, the actual dynamics of looking at a work, could form the basis for substantive painterly statement. It provided implications having to do with scale, color, line, and overall composition. The novel mechanical algorithms involved in examining film and videotape encourage us to re-examine the premises of all of these formal decisions. Moreover, a comparative structural examination of this aspect of various media may lead to work in which the modes of examination become elemental working materials. Paul Sharits' *Frozen Frames* may be seen in this light, as may the use of "stills" in Yvonne Rainer's *Film About a Woman Who* . . . . In a more extended context, human attitudes and mechanisms of process may also be approached as modes of examination (or media); these are treated as elemental working materials by a number of artists who work in film and video (e.g., Acconoci, Oppenheim).
3. Film and video are both enmeshed by two difficult questions of function. The first question concerns their role as communications media, and has to do with reproducibility, the societal consequences of wide distribution, and the nature of expectational modalities imposed upon them by the exhibition context.

The second problem is concerned with justification of the representational function as a coherent communicative form. Where this function is understood to render the medium transparent, as in narrative cinema, the justification assumes the guise of semiological or phenomenological inquiry. Where a more literal understanding of representation is assumed, as in the use of film or video for documentation, the (frequently understated) justification may be inferred from the sort of representation introduced into painting by Jasper Johns. The representation is so situated within the work as to become an aspect of its formal structure, rather than an aspect of its language. The reliability of this fine discrimination is being tested in recent films by Hollis Frampton (*Straits of Magellan*).

4. On the basis of their immense mimetic capability, we grant film and video the ability to include human language. Not only coded languages but also what have been called "graded" linguistic features, such as tone and manner of delivery, are included within the capability of these media. Traditionally, this capacity has been as significant to the narrative side of cinema as the representational function has been to its use as documentation. Of course, these media can cope with a wide variety of communicative forms other than the spoken language; examples include visual or physical signs in two and three dimensions, codes of visual and acoustic composition and style, and in fact all human interactive devices which do not rely on touch, smell, taste, or inertial factors.

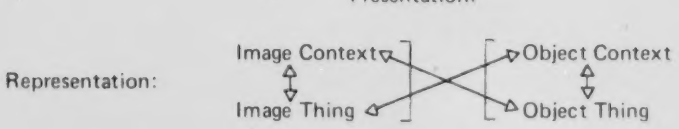
   This peculiar communicative versatility of film and video demands a special sort of attention. As it would seem that there is reason for concern regarding cognitive deficiencies in the ordinary language where it is used as a vehicle for careful analytical discourse, it would be most interesting to discover ways of using film or video as contexts for communication in substantively extended languages. Put another way, is it possible to devise settings within these media for the articulation of cognitively cogent statements which are intrinsically incapable of being written down?

5. Film and video bear reference to a duality between the Sender and the Receiver. That is, instances of film and video (like all kinds of exhibits) are bound to predetermined contextual circumstances and information on some level. Even anonymous live video installations share in this property; in fact, such work is largely efficacious as an exploration of the terms of this particular property.

Now it is curious how many of these aspects of film and video are bound up in various sorts of fairly complex *relations*. The phrase 'translational light recording' suffices to characterize the tools, but the capabilities are determined by relational properties:

Reproduction:	Copy	◁——▷	Original
Representation:	Image	◁——▷	Object
Sign:	Signifier	◁——▷	Signified
Presentation:	Context	◁——▷	Thing
Communication:	Sender	◁——▷	Receiver

When they interact, some of these relations generate more complex relational matrices; here is an example of one interaction between Representation and Presentation:



This is a simplified interaction, based upon the expectation that an Image will act as the sole contact we get with the Object in its Context, and that in considering the nature of a given Thing's Image we are inherently relating to the Image along with its Context. This isolation of Object from Image may be subverted, of course, if Object and Image are placed in direct interaction; the simplified interaction between Object and Image which is diagrammed suffices for most light *recording* systems, but fails for live video.

Another way to look at these relations is to discriminate structural similarities among them. A Reproduction may be considered to be a special sort of Representation, which may be considered as a special sort of Sign. This reduces all three to semiotic functions, like language. Of course, the relative primacy of linguistics and semiotics is a problem that has been approached in various ways; I would prefer to leave open the possibility that non-linguistic extensions of a linguistic system might appear, thus offering an exhibit of the primacy of semiotic structure.

The ease with which these three relations apparently reduce to semiotic elements is contingent upon my momentary slurring of the

definition of 'signified' and the fact that I have avoided difficulties associated with the systematic or syntactical mechanisms which might be involved. Nevertheless, it is clear that film and video are deeply involved with semiotic relationships, and that there are still other relations, having to do with Context (including form) and with Communication, which may also be explored. As the artists' work proceeds toward the clarification and identification of these relations in all of their ramifications, can we begin to see the formation of a platform for any subsequent stage of activity?

First, of course, it is possible to use these media as their own subject matter, as it is possible to extend any language. " . . . Structure may serve as expression or content of a still higher system. This is a repeatable process embodying the historical-empirical principle of transcendency which is the basis of every system of signification. Potentially every semiological system can be incorporated into a new system," as Jack Burnham says (*The Structure of Art*, p. 26). There are already works which define media in terms of physical characteristics (my *Yellow Movie (date)* series), modalities of expectation (Douglas Davis' *Images from the Present Tense I*), representation-defining contexts (my *Third Film Feedback*), modalities of examination (Kevin Fix's *Film Fragments*), and so forth, and which proceed to form statements on another level.

At least one further development in this direction can be expected. The definitional integrity of these media within our broader societal context is insured within the temporal limits imposed by changing technology. Ultimately, however, the structure of technological change itself will suggest the implementation of systematic structures which would employ *media* as formal elements in a higher system of signification.

Another strategy entails exploration of the fullest semiotic capacity of film and video, extending from their inclusion of the natural language. What particular property of these media renders this undertaking either auspicious or plausible? Perhaps the answer lies in the temporal flexibility of these media as articulators of the sort of human interface which is always characteristic of continuous, graded *perception* of a work. Time and expectation, as generally medium-interactive commodities, can act as semantic extensions of the normal static objectification which dominates graphic and plastic media. These perceptual values are interactive with the semiological mechanisms of film and video. Michael Snow's *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx*

to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen uses these values as parameters of an extended semiological structure, whose systematic terms he investigates in the course of formulating a statement at the level of the metalanguage of the extended language. He also, in effect, attempts to exhaust the entire syntagmatic system of the extended natural language.

The exhaustion of systematic terms would not resolve the question of whether cogent statements of cognitive interest might still find unique expression within an extended language itself. It might be helpful to introduce an informal model from our experience which could make the workability of an extended system appear attractive. The perceptual interface with a work, as an experiential modality, comes close to being identifiable with the non-linguistic component of consciousness. 'Consciousness,' as a cultural code, relates the linguistic component of our experience to the more immediately experiential part of life. The way in which language becomes unbonded from our direct experience, as we begin to explore these terms more thoroughly, is a familiar part of *our experience.* Now, just as the interaction between linguistic and more directly perceptual experience seems to be mimetic of consciousness, so also (within language) the dichotomy between artificial and natural languages, derived from Kant's concepts of "analytic" and "synthetic," seems to be a map of the cultural code of 'consciousness.' The verbally elusive quality of direct perception is reflected in the way any object language ultimately fails to include statements about it which are part of the natural language. Extending the natural language to include semiologically effective elements of direct experience, a suggestion due to Henry Flynt (as explored in his unpublished paper, "Some New Interactions Between Language and Consciousness," 1972), could revise the conditions of examination of object languages.

All of these considerations are tied to the presuppositions of semiological analysis. By clouding the definition of the 'signified' as "a concept or mental representation of the 'thing'" (Burnham, p. 22), semiology dodges fundamental philosophical issues in the interest of bonding language more closely to 'consciousness.' The Sign is not actually a relation at all; a 'relation' must be defined in terms of a closed (artificial) language. The Sign can *function* adequately as a relation only when the object language assumes the isolated character of an artificial language. This limitation, which is the definitive condition of *criticism* as an operator upon an independent object

language or *text*, is the only condition which can grant semiological analysis the dualistic structure necessary for relating the natural language to 'consciousness.' Ultimately, the Sign is dependent upon a closed artificial language, presumed to be embedded within the natural language. In considering a possible extended semiotic system, in which the Sign would no longer have to be independent of the critical metasystem, it will be necessary to have information about the way in which relational structure collapses when it is applied to natural languages or to perceptual experience.

The collapse of artificial languages embedded in natural systems is a subject of particular attention in my work, *Articulation of Boolean Algebra for Film Opticals*, in which this collapse is concatenated with temporal structure which admits the viewer to experiential circumstances beyond the communicative capacity of language. In this film, the embedding natural system is the copying-system of still photography; the rhythmic perceptual component is only readable when the work is projected as a film.

As an "experiment," *Articulation of Boolean Algebra for Film Opticals* (which is the name of the film's *subject*) does not yet define a working extended language; it is an incomplete statement, since the syntax of the new system is insufficiently explored. It is, however, designed to raise the question of whether the available critical tools can provide a metalanguage adequate for dealing with film. I am not denying the power of structuralist tools in relating to a clearly defined object language text. But to the extent that film can aspire to cognitive responsibility as a communicative extension of language, it must also to that same degree prove intractible as a subject of systematic analysis through the use of structuralist tools (the tools for analysis of and which are a part of the natural language).

Where the direct experience of film or video is at variance with its characterization by language, the efficacy and completeness of ordinary language stands in doubt.

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NARRATION AND NARRATIVITY IN FILM

Robert Scholes

Let us assume that there is something called narrative that can exist apart from any particular method of narration or any particular narrative utterance, as we assume that there is something called the English language that exists apart from any particular form of discourse or any individual speech act in English. Narration is, first of all, a kind of human behavior. It is specifically a mimetic or representative behavior, through which human beings communicate certain kinds of messages. The modes of narration may vary extraordinarily. (In passing, I should say that I am aware of our customary distinction between what is told and what is enacted, which leads us to oppose narrative representation to dramatic enactment. In this case, however, I am using the word narration in its broadest sense to include both plays and stories, along with other forms of imitation.) A narrative, then, may be recounted orally, committed to writing, acted out by a group of actors or a single actor, presented in wordless pantomime, represented as a sequence of visual images, with or without words, or as a cinematic flow of moving pictures, with or without sounds, speech, music, and written language.

All of these mimetic kinds of behavior have certain features in common, which enable us to consider them together as narrative. First of all, they belong to a special class of symbolic activity which forces the interpreter to make a distinction between his own immediate situation and some other situation which is being presented to him through the medium of narration. In narrative there is always a spectator or interpreter who is situated in a space/time reference different from that of the events narrated. The *process* of narration culminates in the interpreter's immediate frame of reference, but it *refers* to events outside of that immediate situation. This is as true for my dinner-time recital of the little events of my day as it is

for a performance of *King Lear* or *Swan Lake*, or a reading of *War and Peace*. Narration, then, rests upon the presence of a narrator or narrative medium (actors, book, film, etc.) and the absence of the events narrated. These events are present as fictions but absent as realities. Given this situation, it is possible to distinguish different kinds and qualities of narration by the varying extents to which they emphasize either that immediate process of narration (as an actor may draw attention to himself as performer or a writer to himself as stylist) or, on the other hand, emphasize those mediated events themselves. Using our common critical terminology, it is possible to say that a narration is more fictional as it emphasizes the events narrated, and more lyrical as it emphasizes its own language, and more rhetorical as it uses either language or events for some persuasive end.

Before looking more closely at the processes of narration, it may be useful to pause here and consider the relationship of narrative to theories of literature and literary value. The Russian formalists and the Prague school of structuralists, and in particular Roman Jakobson, have attempted to isolate the quality of "literariness" as a feature added to ordinary language. They have defined literariness as language calling attention to itself, or as a kind of message in which emphasis is placed on the form of the utterance rather than on its referential capacity. For the student of narrative, however, it is clear that this notion is applicable only to the lyrical dimension of an utterance. If narratives may be considered to be literary, they must be literary also in a way which is more purely narrative. Let me try to put this problem in a more concrete fashion.

We can begin by considering a question: what distinguishes a literary narrative from my recital of the events of my day? Is it a matter of the style of my performance—my language, voice, gesture, as opposed to those of a literary raconteur—or is it a matter of the events themselves—the trivial, loosely ordered events of my day, as opposed to events of greater consequence shaped to a more aesthetically satisfying pattern? The question—which need not be answered—reinforces the notion that there are two distinct formal dimensions to narrative utterances: a presentational form which is immediate (language, gesture, etc.), and a represented form which is at one remove from the level of performance itself. In a novel, for instance, there is the language of the author at one level, and the representation of character, situation, and event at another. In a play, there is the language of the author, the performance of the actor, and the deeds of the character to consider: three easily discerned levels at which form is perceptible. And film adds at least one level to these, just through the processes of photography itself: camera-angle, lighting, focus, etc.

In a sense, each of these formal levels adds a certain amount of literariness to the process simply by existing. Take, for instance, a text which can be read as a book, enacted on a stage, or filmed and projected on a screen—like Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Each of the added levels of presentational style intensifies the literariness of the experience by its own artifice: language plus enactment plus photography. And the achieved fiction is *there* with a specificity which the printed text alone can never hope to match. The price for this intensity is a reduction in the interpretive richness of the written text—and this happens as every level is added. When the play is staged, each performance makes interpretive choices for the reader—but no two performances make all the same choices. When the story is filmed, all choices are final. Which suggests that one ought to be very careful about confusing interpretive richness with the quality of literariness in any given work. Life itself, with all its quotidian contingency, provides the richest possible field for interpretation. Art reduces this field drastically. And that is why we value it—not the only reason why, but perhaps the main one. My example, of course, being a film based on an enactment of a particularly rich verbal text, is oversimple and may even be misleading in certain respects. Certainly I do not wish to suggest that verbal texts are rich and cinematic ones impoverished with respect to interpretability. Rather, it is my ultimate intention to indicate the different kinds of intepretation that verbal and cinematic texts entail, and to illustrate this with some brief examples drawn from recent American films. But first it will be necessary to return to some consideration of the general aspects of narrative behavior.

Any telling or recounting of a string of events may be called narration. But not every narration yields a narrative, and not every narrative makes a story. By becoming a story, or pretending to be a story, a narration arrives at literariness of the fictive kind. A story is a narration that attains a certain degree of completeness, and even a fragment of a story or an unfinished story will imply that completeness as an aspect of its informing principle—the intentionality that governs its construction. Given its linear, consecutive character, it is not surprising that film has come to be a predominantly narrative medium. That it should be dominated by stories, however, is somewhat more surprising, but dominated by stories it is, to a much greater extent than printed books are dominated by novels.

At this point it may be useful to review some terminology. A *narration* is a process of enactment or recounting which is a common feature of our cultural experience. We all do some of it every day. When this process is sufficiently coherent and developed to detach itself from the flux of cultur-

al interchange, we perceive it as a *narrative*. As a perceived narrative begins to imply a special kind of pointedness or teleology, we recognize that it is a *story*, and we regard it with a certain set of expectations about its expressive patterning and its semantic content. We have a continuum here, like the color spectrum, which our perceptual mechanism breaks into discrete levels. And the level we recognize as "story" is distinguished by certain structural features in presentation which in turn require of the perceiver an active participation which I should like to call "narrativity." This word is presently used, by French critics primarily, to refer to a property of films themselves—their narrative quality. But the word seems a trifle misleading in English, in that it implies a more sentient character than we generally allow to an artifact. For this reason and some others, I should like to suggest that we employ the word "narrativity" to refer to the process by which a perceiver actively constructs a story from the fictional data provided by any narrative medium. A fiction is presented to us in the form of a narration which guides us as our own active narrativity seeks to complete the process that will achieve a story.

The nature of narrativity is, to some extent, culture-bound. It is a matter of learned or acquired behavior, like the acquisition of a particular language, but it is based on a predisposition or potential of the human species to acquire this particular kind of behavior. In the contemporary Western world, the culture of narrativity appears to be sufficiently homogeneous so that it may be considered in the way that a single language may be—as a systematic whole. We are only beginning to study "readers reading," as opposed to the texts that they read, so my remarks on narrativity will have to be rough and ready, based, to a certain extent, on intuitive extrapolations from my own experience as a reader and a teacher of reading. But it is also possible to base a study of narrativity at least partially upon texts, if we consider texts in various media. That is, things that are left to the reader's narrativity in some media are presented directly in others. The arrival of film on the narrative scene has enabled us to perceive certain features of fiction more clearly because they are part of the narration in film while they have only been part of the reader's narrativity in fiction. To take the most obvious instance, the visual quality of film reminds us forcibly of how much of fictional narrativity involves the supplying of physical details or the translating of verbal signs into images. Readers who are feeble at such visualizing often fail to realize important aspects of fictional texts. Film, of course, does not raise such problems of visualization. It raises other problems, however, which I shall consider later on. For the moment, it may be useful to break down a bit further the processes of aesthetic interpretation.

The activities of readers and spectators in the face of artistic or recreational texts involve both a passive or automatic translation of semiotic conventions into intelligible elements and an active or interpretive rearrangement of textual signs into significant structures. The automatic part of these operations is a matter of linguistic or semiotic competence and not of special interest to us upon this occasion. The interpretive part concerns us here. The interpreter of lyric poetry, for example, must of course know the language and the verbal conventions in which a poem is cast. But he must go beyond this level of competence to understand the poem. In particular, he must construct a situational structure from clues in the poem—who speaks, to whom, under what circumstances, etc.—and he must also decompose the special linguistic features of the poetic lexicon, grammar, and syntax in order to comprehend them. He must measure poetic structures against the prosaic structures he needs to understand the deviant features of poetic utterance. He must supply missing parts of metaphors; he must acknowledge the ordinary words replaced by unusual ones in order to grasp the functions of the usual ones; he must discover the fundamental syntactic structures in sentences that conceal aspects of those structures. In order to understand, he must explicate or unfold what is implicated or folded into the poem. And the poetic text must be designed to reward such interpretive activity. This activity is a matter of supplying semiotic features that the text requires for interpretation, a matter of building a hermeneutic structure around the text itself. The poem is not the text alone but the text used to construct a complete and intelligible interpretation of it. A poem is a text which requires and rewards poetic procedures (or "poeticity") in its interpretation.

Similarly, a narrative is a text which requires and rewards narrativity. Narrativity involves a number of procedures of interpretive constructing, but one of these may be singled out as the most characteristic feature of this activity. Just as the lyric is characterized by the need to simplify its verbal constructions for interpretation, the narrative is characterized by a need to simplify certain elements in narration. We "make sense" of a poem by perceiving familiar sentence patterns within its unique verbal structure. We make sense of narration in a similar fashion, but at a different level of the text. In a story it is the order of events that concerns us, more than the order of words. And our primary effort in attending to a narration is to construct a satisfying order of events. To do this we must locate or provide two features: temporality and causality.

Narrativity is based upon a mental operation similar to a logical fallacy: *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. What is a fallacy in logic is a principle of fiction: that a cause and effect relationship links the temporal elements in any nar-

rative sequence. I am not suggesting that fiction itself is fallacious in some way, but rather that it is constructed so as to make this fallacy a feature of the fictional world. When we say that a work is "episodic," for instance, we mean that the work frustrates the narrativitous urge for causal connection and we consider this a fictional deficiency (though obviously there may be other non-fictional compensations in any given work). Above all, when we recognize a work as a story, we regard it as having a temporal sequentiality based on cause and effect. This means that if the events in a story are presented in their temporal sequence, much of our narrativity is devoted to establishing the causal connections between one event and the next. It means further that if the events themselves are presented out of temporal sequence, we seek first to arrive at an understanding of the true temporal sequence in order then to grasp the causal sequence informing the temporal. In the course of following even a simple fiction, the processes of narrativity can be quite complex, as we separate the causal from the merely descriptive or contingent, as we seek to anticipate the future events in the causal patterns we discern, and we reconsider past events based on present understandings. The extraordinary popularity of detective fiction since its invention by Poe is based upon the way in which this fictional form incorporates the principles of narrativity within the narration itself. We follow the detective moving through time from crime to solution, while he, in turn, is in the process of constructing a narration of the crime itself from a set of clues encountered without their temporal and causal situations having been clarified. From discrete clues, he constructs a criminal narrative, which finally provides a verification or correction for our own narrativity. Something like this pattern is as old as *Oedipus*, and is at least adumbrated in much drama and in melodramatic fiction. In the theater, the chronology of on stage events tends toward brevity and direct temporal flow, but frequently generates revelations that belong to the time before the play began. There is often a story in a play which includes important events that precede the plot enacted on stage.

The strength of the human disposition toward simple narrativity can be measured in part through the mounting assaults upon that disposition in various modern and post-modern media. Pirandello and Brecht represent in theater two ways of trying to work against the spectator's impulse towards narrativity. Pirandello breaks illusion for aesthetic reasons, to demonstrate the power of illusion, and finally to urge upon us the view that life itself is a matter of enactment and illusion. Brecht seeks to subvert narrativity to allow his theatre ideological scope for the realization of ethical ends. And in film, Resnais and Godard represent positions similar to Pirandello and

Brecht in theater. We could find fictional analogues for these figures as well, in the labyrinths of Robbe-Grillet, or the novelistic journalism of Norman Mailer. Yet all these assaults on narrativity—and their ancestors in Cervantes, Calderon, Diderot, Sterne, etc.—depend upon narrativity and could not function without it. It may even be that no long form of discourse can be received by a reader, spectator, or auditor unless it allows and encourages a certain amount of narrativity in its audience.

The nature of narrativity can be seen in another way. It is not only based upon what is a fallacy in logic, but upon behavior that in psychology must be seen as neurotic or psychotic. Narrativity is a form of licensed and benign paranoia. (How many school children refer to the author of a book as "they" or "them"?) The interpreter of a narrative process assumes a purposefulness in the activities of narration which, if it existed in the world would be truly destructive of individuality and personality as we know them. (I leave aside the question of whether this would be an improvement.) The spectator or reader of a narrative assumes that he is in the grip of a process controlled outside himself, designed to do things to him which he will be powerless to resist, and that all his struggles will only enmesh him further in the author's toils. Much of our impatience with inferior fiction comes from our loss of faith in the author's power. When he fails to anticipate our reactions and to lay traps for us into which we delightedly stumble, we begin to wonder if he is in control at all and to fear that we may have to move out of narrativity and into narration itself—or else simply return to entirely non-narrative behavior.

A feature of narrativity is our desire to abandon certain dimensions of existence, certain quotidian responsibilities, and place ourselves under the illusionary guidance of a maker of narratives, upon whom we rely because we respect his powers. There is something very undemocratic about all this, and uncritical as well. Criticism begins when narrativity ceases. Life resumes when narrativity ceases. Call it escape or call it transcendence, narrativity is a pleasurable state of consciousness which is as different from other states as the dreaming part of sleep is from the other parts. This element of narrativity, which is perhaps its most fundamental and most primitive dimension, is a source of dissatisfaction to many contemporary writers and filmmakers. This quality of submission and abandon, which is so characteristic of narrativitous activity, has led some creators of narrative artifacts to try forcing the reader out of his familiar patterns of narrativity and into some more dynamic and tendentious attitude toward the text. The search for a "zero degree" of writing, in which the writer simply provides materials out of which a reader constructs a text, is, in the terms I have been using, an attempt to turn narrativity into narration itself. The

ultimate form of this tendency would be a book with blank pages, or a silent concert (which John Cage has given us), an empty picture frame, a motion-picture screen lit by the lamp of the projector but showing only its own texture and perhaps the motes in the middle distance or the specs on the lens. These anti-forms all have been or will be tried, but they are capable of little development. Even an encore to a silent concert presents a problem. And the zero degree of life is death.

I should like to suggest that the proper way for narrative artists to provide for their audiences an experience richer than submissive stupefaction is not to deny them the satisfactions of story, but to generate for them stories which reward the most energetic and rigorous kinds of narrativity. It is possible, as Shakespeare knew, to provide some plain satisfactions for the simple or the weary while also rewarding those who are ready to give a narrative the fullest attention of their mental and emotional powers. In the remaining portion of this paper, I wish to turn my attention to the way film, in particular, can achieve this and is achieving this at present, even in works of what might be called the middle range, that do not aspire to the summits of aesthetic approbation. In order to do this—and at the risk of covering over-familiar ground for some of my audience—I shall begin with a brief review of the nature of cinematic signs.

As Christian Metz has made abundantly clear, film and narrative have such a powerful affinity that their relationship assumes a supreme naturalness. When, in the eighteenth century, Lessing sought so elaborately to contrast the mimetic possibilities of verbal narration and pictorial representation, he neatly (too neatly, doubtless) divided the world between them—assigning to the sequential, arbitrary signs of fiction the narration of actions, and to the simultaneous, motivated signs of painting, the description of objects and persons. If he were brought back to life today he would recognize in cinema the reconciliation of the parts of his divided world. For the motion-picture film gives us objects and persons moving and enacting in a visual system of narration which combines the powers of poetry and painting in an extraordinary synthesis.

The product of this synthesis, however, is a very different thing from verbal narration, more different than we sometimes realize, and it is different in a way that Lessing would understand—different because the signs in cinema function differently from the signs of verbal fiction. In the language of verbal narration, each sign is first interpreted as a concept or category, and then, where this is relevant and possible, connected to a referent of some sort. Thus, if I say to you, "There's a dog on the lawn," you translate the sound-image "dog" into some canine category of your own, and if you

are moved to look out the window and see for yourself, you may finally perceive a specific referent which will supplant the conceptual category in your interpretive operation. If I provide you with a fictional dog, however, your concretization of the empty category will depend on an interaction between my narration and your narrativity. If I say, "He's lifting his leg," your image must lift a leg, preferably a hind leg, but the choice of leg is left up to you, unless and until I provide you with new verbal data which forces you to correct your image.

If, on the other hand, I present you with a cinematic dog—the signifying process is entirely different. You are confronted with a sign tightly tied to a specific referent, which you then may relate to a categorial concept or a set of such concepts by a process which may be partly conscious and partly not. I may misdirect you, if I can use words in my film, calling a male dog "Lassie," and if the dog is sufficiently wooly or the camera work and editing sufficiently adroit, you may never detect the imposture, and thus assign the referent to a category which is fictionally correct but factually false—a problem which can hardly come up in verbal narration, where if I call a dog Lassie you are obliged to provide her with all the proper equipment or to leave parts of her blank until I direct your attention to them.

The point of this excursion into sign language is to suggest that though the "same narrative" may be presented in both verbal and cinematic form, the narration and the narrativity will be extremely different. This is why my earlier example of *Henry V* was misleading to a certain extent. Since the verbal part of a play is entirely oral, it may be completely reproduced in a film. In a novel, however, much of the language is busy with description and reflection, which must be eliminated in cinematic translation. Even voice-over narration in films made from novels, which is used very effectively in a good film like *Farewell My Lovely* or a great one like *Jules et Jim*, is highly selective when compared to the total verbiage of the book. These differences in narration correspond to important differences in narrativity. The reader's narrative processes in dealing with printed fiction are mainly oriented toward visualization. This is what the reader must supply for a printed text. But in cinematic narrative, the spectator must supply a more categorial and abstract narrativity. This is one reason why film criticism is frequently more interesting than literary criticism. A well-made film requires interpretation while a well-made novel may only need understanding. There is a redundancy in providing a verbal gloss for a verbal object which does not apply when the object is significantly visual.

Some movements in contemporary fiction can be seen as attempts to acquire a cinematic opacity and freedom from conceptual thinking. Alain

Robbe-Grillet has tried very hard to be a camera and produced some interesting verbal *tours de force*. But these experiments in writing against the grain of verbal narration are limited in their developmental possibilities. A writer who wants to be a camera should probably make a movie. Makers of narrative films can also work against the grain, and films have been made which try to conceptualize so much that they founder in seas of rhetoric. These two different narrative media require and must encourage two different kinds of narrativity—though both admit of great intensity and great complexity. Before concluding, I should like to explore some aspects of narrativity in recent American films—as an illustration of the processes I have been discussing perhaps too abstractly. These processes involve the conceptualization of images and the construction of frameworks of causality and value around such concepts.

In the past year I found myself moved in very different ways to different kinds of narrativity by the images of America presented in three films: *The Great Waldo Pepper*, *Godfather II*, and *The Parallax View*. Having seen each film only once, I am in no position to argue their merits vigorously or to analyze them with any pretensions to depth and rigor. But each of them proved striking to me, and left me with residues of narrativity that have become a part of my cognitive apparatus. *Waldo Pepper* is a charming film, perhaps too conscious of its charm. It summons up an America already coded for us by Norman Rockwell—but it transcends this quality on several occasions. In the crowd scenes around the fatal plane crash we find Rockwell's world metamorphosed into something like Nathaniel West's—with an economy and power far beyond the ponderous Westian fidelities of the cinematic *Day of the Locust*. Suddenly, the blood lust, the brutality behind the placid surface of mid-America bursts through the Rockwellian facade, and it is all the more convincing because of the sincerity with which that facade has been established in the film. In the processes of my own narrativity, continuing long after the viewing itself was completed, still continuing, joining the images of the great meta-film I am constructing in my mind, other images have come to dominate my recollection of that film. Not the Rockwellian faces, not even the marvellous aerial acrobatics, but features of landscape and humanity which are closer to Grant Wood than to Rockwell. In particular, I see a frame house, a tree, a person or two at home in these surroundings, and beyond them the fields and the sky. The camera is stationary or moving slowly, and the sense of peace, of man's harmony with nature, is overwhelming. These images generate in me the same feeling I experience when I go back to Iowa, where you can smell the fertility of the land and understand how people can love it, and how that farmer's love for

the earth must transcend national boundaries and go back for centuries to beyond the beginning of history. That this sense of land should be so strong in a film about the sky, about restlessness, about people who find no resting place on the ground, is important. It is a measure of a kind of complexity in a film which is in many respects simple, and it is a complexity that comes from a loving attention to images which invite us to go through them to the meanings behind them.

Our narrativity with respect to a film like *Waldo Pepper* begins with a simple attempt to register the images, to categorize them and assign them value according to whatever cultural codes we have available. Where I use Norman Rockwell and Grant Wood, someone else might operate with different paradigms, which might not carry any labels at all. But in any case, as we proceed along the narrative track of the film, we construct the story of Waldo himself from the incidents presented to us, and we charge that story with value and emotion in very complex ways. What I wish to suggest here is that a part of that vital and complex process by which we accomplish this energizing of the narration depends upon such things as our codifying and assigning value to particular images. In this case, Waldo's fate is as it is because his life is torn between the placidity of that prairie landscape, tamed by man, and the pettiness and cruelty of man as a social being. Waldo cannot accept the placidity of the one side of his culture and he despises the mundane cupidity and sensationalism of the other. His lies and his flights are both attempts to transcend these realities, to construct a mythic world which he can comfortably inhabit. But one way or another, planes must come down. Myths may be created but they cannot be lived.

Some devotees of film may object to my discussion as moving too far from the reality of dissolves and jump cuts to some airy realm of thematic speculation. But my point is that this is precisely what we must do in the realization of a narrative film. The cinematic world invites—even requires—conceptualization. The images presented to us, their arrangement and juxtapositioning, are narrational blueprints for a fiction that must be constructed by the viewer's narrativity.

The images of America in *Godfather II* are different from those of *Waldo Pepper*, of course, as different as Little Italy from Nebraska or Las Vegas from Keokuk. But the images evoke similar processes of narrativity in our minds. For me, the scenes of Ellis Island were worth a stack of history books. One long shot in particular, the camera tracking slowly past the immigrant hordes, labeled and herded like cattle, brought the dream and reality of America into vertiginous proximity. Some of my ancestors stood

in those lines, and I felt closer to them as I watched than I had ever felt before. The slow camera, the warm lighting, the hopeful patience of the crowds provided an image closer to the heart of this country than any Mayflower or Plymouth Rock. The film, of course, is about the betrayal of this dream: the mafioso in his fortress, the senator in his whorehouse, the conference of thugs and politicians in Batista's Cuba. These images must be set next to those patient lines of immigrants for the film's full irony to be achieved. But once we grasp them they remain with us for a long time.

The final film I wish to mention is less highly regarded than the other two and was, I believe, less successful commercially. But for me it is a film of extraordinary interest, despite its weaknesses—and to a certain extent because of them. *The Parallax View* attempted two remarkable narrative feats. It took the paranoia that lies benevolently at the heart of the narrative process itself and the other paranoia that threatens to overwhelm our national life, and tried to make them congruent. And it undertook a single scene requiring the most intense narrativity I can recall encountering in a film. The picture provides a story that postulates a conspiracy behind the assassinations of various liberal political figures and satirizes the complacency or complicity of the inquiries into those assassinations. All the characters in the film who begin to perceive this plot against America die violently, and the last heroic defender is trapped into a situation where he is himself taken to be an assassin and is finally killed by those truly guilty who are pretending to aid in his arrest. It is a chilling film, pointedly and scandalously close to actual contemporary events. It shares a view of America with the frighteningly irrational readers of scandal magazines and the uncritical devotees of paranoid conspiracy theories. As a film, its lack of popular success probably stems from the fact that its audience could not accept the slaughter of their protagonist. In the formulas of popular fiction, this film called for a victorious hero who saved the country from a wicked gang of conspirators. By accepting the paranoia latent in a part of the mass audience while rejecting the power fantasy and wish fulfillment that regularly accompany it, the film alienated its most likely audience. And, of course, those who consider themselves above such things were disqualified from the beginning.

The film had other problems—in pacing and in the logic of its storytelling, leaning too heavily on the invisible masters of conspiracy to tie together the loose ends of its plot, encouraging a sloppy and careless narrativity in the viewer. But it did give us one extraordinary scene. In this episode, the intrepid protagonist, who is trying to infiltrate the conspiracy, faces a futuristic personality test. To qualify as an apprentice assassin, he

must demonstrate that he has the emotional profile of an extremely psychotic individual. The test consists of his being strapped into an electronic chair which monitors his reactions while he is shown slides calculated to produce strong emotional effects upon him: authority figures, sex objects, flags, scenes of violence and brutality, mom-type ladies, homosexuals, apple pie, Captain America—all in a rapid sequence of repetitions and juxtapositions. Our protagonist, to pass the test, must try to generate the appropriate involuntary reactions for a paranoid psychopath, and we, in our own chairs watching the same slides, are inevitably drawn to assist him empathetically by trying to force the appropriate reactions out of our own nervous systems. The result is a kind of mind-blowing sensory overload, a short-circuiting of a narrativity asked to accomplish too much too fast. The vagueness of the monitoring itself, the absence of rules for this game, indicates that the makers of the film were not in imaginative control of their own conception. Thus, the film repeatedly attempts to allow a real and malevolent paranoia to substitute for the benign paranoia at the heart of narrative activity. The film tries to hide its own imaginative inadequacies behind one of its inadequately conceived fictions. This is truly an instructive failure, for we see ideas that might have functioned powerfully reduced to the level of sensational gimmicks before our eyes.

In these three glances into the processes of cinematic narrativity, I have been trying to suggest the power and importance of conceptualization by the viewer in the realization of narrative films. There is, of course, much more to cinematic narrative than this. And there is much less too. Some aspects of narrative film are simply matters of stimulus and response, in which conceptualization is held to a minimum. This, I take it, is a useful definition of pornography, whether it is the pornography of pleasure or of pain. We need no very elaborate concepts of erotic or brutal acts to be "moved" by enactments of them—and even more "moved" by photographs of the actuality. But such motion, however violent, is not derived from any narrative process. Presumably, to see someone tortured or gratified sexually before our eyes would be even more "moving," and to play the principal role in such a situation ourselves would be the most "moving" condition of all. And this would not be a narrative experience any more. It would be life, not fiction.

Film, because it excells all other narrative media in its rendition of material objects and the actions of creatures, is the closest to actuality, to undifferentiated thoughtless experience. Literature, beginning in language, must exert extraordinary pains to achieve some impression of the real. For this reason, written fiction has almost always used some notion of realism

or verisimilitude as an evaluative standard. For film, the problem is different. It must achieve some level of reflection, of conceptualization, in order to reach its optimum condition as narrative. The best narrative films have always accomplished this, and they have done so cinematically, through scenes and images that induce an appropriate narrativity in their audiences.

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FILM HISTORY AND FILM HISTORIES

Gerald Mast

One of the persistent themes that ran through the reviews of *A Short History of the Movies* when it first appeared was that the book was a serviceable enough short history. But (and there is almost always a but in a good review) when would we get a history of the cinema that would not be a condensation or capsulation but would tell it all? I do not intend to review my reviewers, but I would like to answer their question with another. All what? A history that includes every significant person from W. K. L. Dickson, to Thomas Armat, to Thomas Ince, to Billy Bitzer, to Lee Garmes, to Anita Loos, to Robert Riskin, to Henri Chrétien, to Slavko Vorkapich, to Marilyn Monroe, to Arthur Miller, to J. Parnell Thomas, to Joseph Breen, to Bud Westmore, to Bernard Herrmann, to Natalie Kalmus? That includes every event from the invention of Kinemacolor to the making of *The Birth of a Nation* to Charles Chaplin's love life to Adolphe Menjou's congressional testimony to the judicial proceedings of the *United States vs. Paramount Pictures* to the institution of the motion picture rating system? That includes every kind of film from *Fred Ott's Sneeze,* to a Pathé newsreel, to Betty Boop, to *Citizen Kane,* to an army pictorial film, to a home movie of "Our Trip to Hawaii," to *House of Wax,* to *Dog Star Man*?

The purpose of these rhetorical questions is not to reduce my critics to the absurd. It is an assertion that a truly encyclopedic history of the cinema would not be a history at all but an encyclopedia. There is no way of reducing the totality of cinema data to the order, form, and coherency of history. Although such an orderly coherency is indeed a kind of reduction, its compensating virtue is precisely that of delineating a pattern for these random events so as to illuminate both their significance and their relationships. There is a difference between the history of cinema—

which exists as an inchoate body of virtually infinite data—and a history of the cinema—which selects and orders some portion of that data.

The history of the cinema will never be written; we shall simply have to be satisfied with histories of the cinema. This grand pronouncement contains an assumption not only about the infiniteness of cinema data but about the ability of any single human intelligence to collect it all and set it forth absolutely right. History is not a single entity with a single mind. Different histories will say different things.

A history is merely a theory, and unlike scientific or mathematical propositions, the data can never prove a historical theory to be incontrovertibly correct. We have no way of rolling balls down inclined planes, as Galileo did, to verify and quantify the existence of gravity. Unfortunately, the data can merely disprove historical theories, and a single piece of contradictory evidence leaves a thousand pieces of consistent data in a theoretical shambles.

The deceptive element in the cinema's history is that its life is both so close to us and so short. Unlike the entire history of Western civilization, the history of cinema spans only some eighty years. And unlike the history of the Hundred Years War, it is still possible for a living human being to have existed throughout the cinema's entire existence. Adolph Zukor was born four years before Eadweard Muybridge made his first set of motion photographs. Charles Chaplin was born the same year that W. K. L. Dickson began experimenting with George Eastman's celluloid roll film. Howard Hawks was born the same year as the founding of the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company. Despite the cinema's brief and close existence, the myth of totality—of possessing total knowledge—remains as much a myth for the cinema's history as for any other human phenomenon. After all, the Watergate saga has an even briefer history, and we all lived through all of it, but we still lack total and incontrovertible knowledge of who did what and why.

From the infinite totality of cinema data, the film historian (or historical critic, or historian-theorist) necessarily exercises two kinds of selectivity. First, he raises a question about the data that he finds most interesting, useful, or significant. Second, he examines those documents that seem most relevant to answering that question. I would like to spend my time examining several of the extant histories of the cinema. This survey will, I hope, reveal several things. First, what are the significant questions that have been raised about the history of the cinema? What theories of significance, of cinema, of art, and of history underlie each of these questions? Second, what kinds of documentation do each of

these questions require? What are the rules of evidence and of selection in applying the documents to the significant questions?

The historical question which has been asked most frequently about the history of the cinema may be stated thus: What are the significant works of the cinema art? This most familiar question is also, perhaps, the most attractive. What does it assume? First, that the end of cinema—its final cause in the Aristotelian sense—is the making of objects that can be considered and judged as self-contained entities—how they are made and how well they are made. In such an assumption, the film work is exactly that, a work, analogous to a novel, painting, poem, or symphony. It is a testament to this new form that after only eighty years it has produced so many magnificent film works that can compete for respect and attention with the products of much older and longer traditions.

The essential and primary documents in the history of significant cinema works are films themselves. For this kind of historical inquiry, the important issue is not that a film was made in a studio as a collaborative effort, not that it was financed in a particular way, not that it attracted a certain size or type of audience, and so forth. The sole fact that concerns the historian in this kind of investigation is that however the work got to be what it is, it is what it is. The advantage of such a document is that a film can exist for us concretely on a screen today exactly as it might have existed ten or twenty or sixty years ago. The works themselves are not subject to the erring memories of their stars, directors, cameramen, or producers; they are not contradicted by contrary claims and documents. They simply are.

But like any piece of historical evidence, such documents also contain their own kinds of limitations. First, many of these works are simply not what they were. Silent films were never silent in the theater; black-and-white films were often tinted; extant prints of film classics have been notoriously bowdlerized or cut; today's projectors usually unspool them at unnatural speeds that destroy their original rhythms; the extant prints are frequently third-generation dupes, presenting mere shadows of their original visual beauty.

For instance, consider a film (Gance's *Napoléon*) that was famous for its use of unconventional devices—the triple screen, color, and stereoscopy for several of its sequences. *Napoléon* has often been considered one of the significant works of cinema art; without those special and unconventional devices its significance seems difficult to comprehend. Its acting is often abominable, its structure incoherent, its visual metaphors and symbols stupid and occasionally ugly, and its jingoism makes

D. W. Griffith's patriotism look subtle. Judged entirely in terms of what it is, *Napoléon* seems a totally derivative work—France's grandiose but pedestrian copy of *Birth of a Nation.* Whatever *Napoléon* might have been, it no longer is.

The second disadvantage of using films as one's primary historical documents was revealed in these very condemnations of *Napoléon:* the criteria for significance are personal and impressionistic. Most of the silent films that we consider significant today come to us with their reputations passed on to us by former generations. Thousands of allegedly insignificant films have been lost forever and their significance can neither be retrieved nor revived. In this sense, much of the silent cinema which expired less than fifty years ago, is as irretrievable for us as those thousands of unpublished plays that were written in England between 1576 and 1642.

And is a film a significant work of art because it was immensely popular, expanding the audience and impact of cinema (a criterion that would embrace *The Birth of a Nation* and *Jaws,* but not *Intolerance* and *Citizen Kane*)? Or because it developed and expanded the tools, language, and expressive possibilities of the art (a criterion that would embrace *The Birth of a Nation, Napoléon,* and *Citizen Kane,* but not *City Lights,* and *Bringing Up Baby*)? Or because it influenced other films and the direction of cinema history (a criterion that would embrace *Birth of a Nation, Citizen Kane,* and *Breathless,* but not *Meet Me In St. Louis, Singin' in the Rain,* and *Vertigo*)? Or because it espoused some noble or complex political or moral philosophy (a criterion that would embrace *City Lights* and *Citizen Kane,* but not *The Birth of a Nation, Metropolis,* and *Triumph of the Will*)? Or because of critical and historical consensus (as if artistic quality could be determined democratically, by means of a vote)? Or because it moved the historian and was therefore significant? Or because it fulfilled some theoretical mission or criterion that the historian valued?

In the general and more catholic surveys of cinema history, the criteria of significance are usually eclectic—either the film was popular, influential, innovative, evolutionary, "beautiful," or some combination thereof. Three of the general histories of the cinema art—my own, Arthur Knight's *The Liveliest Art,* and Alan Casty's *Development of the Film*—work with this same problem in different ways. For all three, the primary historical documents are films themselves, their only original research being the indefatigable screening of films. For background material on the making of those films and the industry and society that surrounded

their making, the histories depend on secondary material—the research of others—rather than examining the primary documents themselves.

The central historical question that each of these three histories applies to filmed works appears very early on—in a prefatory or introductory statement of premises. Arthur Knight's *The Liveliest Art*, states its purpose as "to trace, not the history of the movies, but the highpoints of their artistic growth."[1] The key words are "highpoints" and "growth"—and their implication is an evolutionary and organic view of an art's expansion. "Since the story I selected to tell was of the development of an art, I had to forgo much of the chatty gossip about personalities or the behind-the-scenes maneuverings that so often pass for film history."[2] Knight continues, "I have also had to omit mention of many popular and successful films . . . if their contribution to the development of the art were negligible."[3]

Knight defines his essential documents, then, as individual films which he considers important in the development of the art (by which he could be taken to mean progress, evolution, or some other synonym meaning "that it has been fruitful and multiplied"). But when one examines his documentation, there are some puzzling selections. Although he devotes one paragraph to Jean Renoir's silent films, he does not even devote a full sentence to his sound films. His longest discussion is of *Potemkin* (some 2000 words), then *The Last Laugh* (perhaps 1500), then *Greed* (1000), which seems questionable in terms of the cinema's growth; and then two obviously personal and surprising choices—*The Magnificent Ambersons* and *A Woman of Paris* (about 800 words each). *The Birth of a Nation* receives only 400 words of discussion, and *Intolerance* even less. In discussing American sound films, Knight abandons his focus on individual works and even directors to entirely concentrate on types, cycles, genres, and technological discoveries (like 3-D and Cinerama).

In all fairness to Knight, his documentation and organization are signs of the decade (the 1950s) in which he wrote. This may be a sign that cinema history must be rewritten every five years. Many of the Renoir masterpieces of the sound era had not yet been reassembled, the auteurists had not yet provided the apparatus for discussing the individuality of studio directors like Ford and Hawks, and the technological flurry of 1952 had not yet been swept under by the New Wave of 1959. Despite his stated interest in key films as his central documents, Knight is very interested in the state of the film industry and film audience in general—and fully half his book is devoted to examining it in each era.

By contrast, Alan Casty's *Development of the Film* has no interest in the film industry or audience at all. Among the names that do not even appear in his history are Louis B. Mayer, Irving Thalberg, Marcus Loew, Harry Cohn, and Will Hays. Others—like Zukor, Fox, and Laemmle—are cited in a single sentence. Like Knight, Casty's view of the cinema's history as an art is one of organic evolution: "An interpretation of the progress of film as an art form."[4] Casty understands the cinema's artistic history as a "process of advancing, of expanding into a state of the art that effectuates more and more complex combinations of its possibilities."[5] He sees this expanding process as dialectical. The silent period was one of expressive, metaphoric hyperbole; the early sound period its opposite—of literal realism; and the modern period is the synthesis in which the two poles of realism and metaphor intertwine to produce infinitely complex permutations of styles and themes. Beneath Casty's view is a tree-like conception—beginning with a single trunk that splits into two stems and then branches out in a complex variety of possible patterns. Casty's historical system is a self-contained universe of films in which the works themselves engage in a sort of dialectical discourse, totally removed from any of the commercial, cultural, social, political, or industrial pressures that may have affected or influenced them.

Consistent with his premise, Casty's documentation revolves almost exclusively around individual titles and directors, devoting some 1500 words to *L'Avventura* and *Citizen Kane;* about 1000 to *Intolerance, The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari,* and *Ten Days That Shook the World;* and some 600 to *The Birth of a Nation, Broken Blossoms,* and *Potemkin.* A sure sign of Casty's pure devotion to the works themselves, regardless of their cultural or commercial contexts, is one of his chapters on Expressiveness in Sound and Style, in which he lumps the sound films of Eisenstein, von Sternberg, and Vigo.

My own *Short History of the Movies* walks a middle road between Knight and Casty, more devoted to individual works than Knight, more concerned about the social and commercial context than Casty. I begin with a familiar enough premise:

> The history of the movies is, first of all, the history of a new art. . . . Just as the history of the novel is, to some extent, a catalogue of important novels and the history of drama a catalogue of important plays, the history of film as an art revolves around important films.[6]

Unlike Knight and Casty, however, I do not make an evolutionary or progressive assumption about the historical movement of that art. I do

not see the history of film as organic, dialectical, or botanical. I do not see the history of the cinema art as one of progress which is an implication of the idea of evolution. Nor do I see any other kind of history as progressive. Instead of an evolutionary or dialectical assumption as my criterion of significance, I make a very different (though no less problematic) one:

> No great film has ever been made without the vision and unifying intelligence of a single mind to create and control the whole film.[7]

Or again in the conclusion:

> This short history has been a study of the great film minds, of those . . . who saw something very clearly and very deeply about human experience and who possessed the art and craft to translate what they saw into something we could see.

The basis for considering a film work significant is in that word, "mind" (a concept in which I am obviously interested, as a later book makes clear). The only way of my explaining that concept is circular: the totality of a work's style and structure reveals the creative reason for that style and structure.

But I do not limit my history to film works exclusively.

> All movies, great or small, have been made in the context of the entire film industry.[8]

There are "three related problems that have always influenced the artistic product: the film as business, the film as entertainment, and the film as technology."[9] The *Short History's* organization and documentation mirrors this split focus of the premise. Some chapters or sections are devoted exclusively to film works and film workers: *Citizen Kane* and *Birth of a Nation* about 2500 words; *Intolerance* about 1800; *Potemkin* and *The Last Laugh* 1600; *The General, Caligari,* and *The Children of Paradise* 1200; *Grand Illusion, Rules of the Game,* and *Broken Blossoms* 1000; *The Gold Rush, Trouble in Paradise,* and *The Seventh Seal* about 800. Other chapters or sections of the history, however, are devoted much more generally to cycles of films or trends and attitudes of audiences and the industry. The result, of course, is that this supposedly *Short History* is much less short than Knight's or Casty's, and the revised edition, due next month, will be even longer.

These general surveys of cinema history are not the only studies to use movies themselves as their primary historical documents. Both

André Bazin's theory of the realism of deep-focus photography and Andrew Sarris's "auteur theory" are products of historical arguments that depend on film works for their documentation and proof. In this essay, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," Bazin surveys the history of film works to make a distinction between "those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality."[10] He finds these two trends in the silent film, with the montagists (like Eisenstein) and the Expressionists on the side of the image, and the realists (like Flaherty, von Stroheim, and Murnau) on the side of reality. In the early years of synchronized sound, until 1938, Bazin finds these two trends submerged and dominated by the analytic or dramatic pattern of editing—as embodied in the shot-reverse-shot of the talkies. But "those who put their faith in reality," one of the major paths of the silent film, re-emerge in 1939 with the use of panchromatic film and the shot-in-depth (for example, Welles, Wyler, and Renoir).

Bazin finds this style superior because it is, first, more realistic (and, in other essays, Bazin develops his reasons for considering realism the cinema's essential trait); and its guiding myth second, it allows more active participation of the viewer (consistent with Bazin's belief in both Free Will and Democracy); and, third, it preserves the ambiguity of reality without forcing a meaning on the viewer (yet somehow Bazin argues that this ambiguity is not truly ambiguous—an ambiguity he never unscrambles).

Whatever the theoretical problems with this argument (and I have developed those in my article, "What Isn't Cinema?"),[11] it is based on historical documents that are also questionable. For example, have the documents—the films—produced the conclusion or has the conclusion led Bazin to see the films in a certain way? Does Abel Gance put his faith in the image or in reality? At different moments of *Napoléon* he seems to have different faiths. Von Stroheim, one of Bazin's pure realists, cuts relentlessly. I have recently seen *Blind Husbands* once again, and I find it one of the tighter cut films of the silent period. In *Greed*, the cross-cutting between the cat, prowling about Mac's canary, and Marcus, Mac's antagonist, is one of the effective touches that still remains in the mutilated film. Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (which Bazin defends as realist on the basis of its being a "documentary of faces") also depends on montage that consistently contrasts Joan's face with those of her accusers. Renoir (another of Bazin's realists) constructs his famed "Dance of Death" in *Rules of the Game*, the brilliantly brutal slaughter of the rabbits and pheasants, entirely on

the rhythms of montage. Like any historical document, films must be interpreted—which means that they can be misinterpreted.

Andrew Sarris titles his major essay in *The American Cinema,* one of his fuller statements of the auteur theory, "Toward a Theory of Film History." Sarris's view of film works parallels Knight's, Casty's, and my own:

> The thousands of sound films in the English language exist for their own sake and under their own conditions. They constitute their own history . . . Old movies come out of their historical contexts, but they must be judged ultimately in the realm of now.[12]

The difficulty with this historical argument is the same as with any that uses films as documents. The films must be judged. If the terms on which those judgements rest are fuzzy (as Pauline Kael, in her devastating refutation, "Circles and Squares,"[13] shows they are), then both the judgements and the historical arguments become suspect. One continually wonders if Sarris's values proceed from the documents or if he has merely made pronouncements, thrusting his tastes on the documents.

This problem of artistic judgement is one of the prime sources of irritation for those historians who seek a less equivocal kind of documentation. This quest for less ambiguous documents has produced a second kind of historical question that has been applied to the cinema: what is the social history of the cinema? What is the relationship of the cinema to the society that produces it and purchases it? How does the society or culture influence film style and content? How do film styles and content influence the society and culture? These historical questions assume that films are not self-contained entities that exist on screens, out of time (which, in a sense, they are and they do). It assumes that film works are produced in certain places at certain times, for certain people in those places and times, and having an effect and impact on those people and times. It further assumes that one could and should be as interested in times, places, and people as in the self-contained beauties of light passing through plastic.

The only general history of the cinema to ask such a question in the last thirty-five years appeared recently—Robert Sklar's *Movie-Made America.* Sklar felt that he "had to go beyond the handful of major directors and the few dozen classic films, and even beyond the great inchoate mass of movies as a whole, to try to understand motion pictures in their largest sense, as a mass medium of cultural communica-

tion."[14] As his title implies, the movies have made America a part--and perhaps a large part—of what it is. And so this kind of historical question required Sklar "to redefine ideas of culture, shifting focus from artists and their creations to people and their lives."[15] In that examination, Sklar's ultimate point is that "the advent of movies. . . clearly posed a challenge to the existing cultural policies and institutions. . . ."[16] Sklar's thesis is that movies arose from a subculture, from below, and never lost their off-center pressure to change American society until the McCarthy era.

In a lengthy sentence, Sklar sets forth some of the lesser cultural questions that follow from his major one—and these questions reveal how distant Sklar's historical question is from Knight's, Casty's, or my own. "This task has led me to examine . . . the invention of motion picture technology (an issue treated in Knight and Mast, but not Casty); the nature and revolution of the motion picture audience (treated cursorily in Mast and Knight, not at all in Casty); the organization and business tactics of the movie trade (cursorily in Mast and Knight, not in Casty); the design and economics of theatres (no treatment in the other three); the social and professional lives of movie workers (not treated); government policies toward movies (very cursorily treated in Mast, not at all in Knight and Casty); the attitudes and strategies of censorship groups (not treated); and the cultural influence of movies at home and overseas (not treated).

In keeping with his different historical questions, Sklar's primary documents are also very different. They include unfamiliar, quaint, and forgotten books of those early eras such as Muybridge's and Marey's publications, *How to Run a Picture Theater* (1914), *How Pictures Are Made* (1918), *The Sins of Hollywood* (1922), *Motion Pictures and Youth,* one of the Payne Fund studies of 1933, and *Red Treason in Hollywood* (1949). They also include contemporary newspaper and magazine articles (such as "Nickel Madness" in a *Harper's Magazine* of 1907, "The Movie-Struck Girl," in a *Woman's Home Companion* of 1918, and "Social Standards and the Motion Picture," in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* of 1918), along with government reports and legal briefs (such as *Edison v. American Mutoscope Company, Black v. City of Chicago, Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio,* and *United States v. Paramount Pictures*).

There are chapters in which Sklar works with movies themselves as his primary documents, but these seem the weakest in the book. Sklar must use this kind of documentation occasionally, for one of his issues

is the impact that movies have made on American life—and he realizes that it is incumbent upon him to examine some direct interrelationship of movies and life. In one chapter, for example, he uses the evolution of the films of Frank Capra and Walt Disney during the 1930s as a barometer for the entire country's growing social concern and idealistic commitment. He examines the comic fancifulness and magic lightness of the Capra and Disney films early in the decade, and then contrasts that comic fancy with the more socially and morally conscious films that both made later in that decade. Although the films seem to reveal this transition, one wonders if Sklar's explanation is the only one for it. Perhaps the two artists had merely gotten older (a process that frequently robs people of their fancies), or had merely gotten more successful (a process that frequently leads people to take themselves more seriously). The cultural conclusion (that the progression of the Disney-Capra movies mirrored an evolution in American cultural consciousness) is merely an interesting hypothesis that does not proceed inevitably from the documents, much less inevitably than Sklar's other arguments based on printed documents, which quite convincingly demonstrate the war that the Established culture tried to wage against this powerful cultural parvenu—the movies.

Sklar's predecessor as social historian of the movies is Lewis Jacobs (whose classic work, *The Rise of the American Film*, was published in 1939). This older book differs sharply from these newer ones in several respects. First, the author feels no need to set out his premises and assumptions at the beginning of the book. Unlike the histories of the last decade or two, there was perhaps less consciousness that one could ask different questions about the same body of historical data. The reader can only discover Jacobs's premises by examining his documentation, organization, and proportions.

Second, this examination reveals the author to be far more eclectic than any of these others. He devotes some chapters to the movies as art—using the movies themselves as documents. He devotes others to detailing the history of the film industry and its institutions and practices, using periodical documents such as *The Moving Picture World*, and *Views and Film Index*. He devotes still others to biographical material on stars, directors, and producers using periodicals (like *Photoplay*) and contemporary biographies as his documents. But the most interesting and valuable chapters seem to generalize about the cycles and types of films that the industry produced, for those were the kinds of things that audiences wanted to see.

For these discussions, Jacobs's primary evidence was often merely

the titles and plot outlines of films, and a lengthy string of such titles and outlines was frequently very convincing that such a kind or type of film definitely existed and was, therefore, symptomatic of audience tastes.

> The gangster theme gradually became rarer on the screen until 1937, when it was revived in a new vein. Now, as the titles of the pictures signified, the gangster was bitterly denounced and deprecated. Pictures manifesting the new attitude included *Crime Does Not Pay*, a series of shorts which occasionally went to the extreme of depicting union organizers as racketeers; *20,000,000 Years in Sing Sing, The Wrong Road, The Petrified Forest,* which condemned gangsters; and *Show Them No Mercy*, a denunciation of kidnappers, wherein a girl, in heroic and exemplary style, kills the ruthless gangsters with a machine gun (greater force overcoming force). Others were: *Public Hero Number 1*, praising the G-Man; *Dangerous to Know;* and *The Last Gangster.*[17]

One reason, of course, that Jacobs was able to do so much and raise so many kinds of historical questions in his book is that he wrote it in 1939—a year that now represents about half of the cinema's history. The second reason is that, even so, he confined himself to the American film, as no history of the movie art (such as Knight's, Casty's, or my own) could possibly do today. To Jacobs, of course, we all owe the notion of cycles and genres, one of the essential ways of discussing American studio films of the twenties and thirties. But in his assessment of individual directorial talent, Jacobs was also amazingly astute, predating some of the judgments of the auteurists by several decades. Those studio directors who receive lengthy attention in his chapter devoted to "Contemporary Directors" of the 1930s are King Vidor, Fritz Lang, Josef von Sternberg, Rouben Mamoulian, Frank Capra, and John Ford. Jacobs considers George Cukor and William Wyler briefly within a group that also includes William Wellman, Michael Curtiz, W. S. Van Dyke, Mervyn Leroy, William Dieterle, and Sydney Franklin. The name of Howard Hawks does not appear in the book at all.

Because of its close attention to cultural attitudes in particular periods, the historical question about the cinema's social significance is especially appropriate for narrower and more detailed studies of individual times and cultures. Robert Sklar would probably agree that each of his chapters could serve as the basis for an entire book. Several of the American eras seem particularly ripe for careful cultural study that could relieve us generalists of the legends, cliches, and superficial-

ities that have been passed on to us as fact. The nickelodeon era (1905-1910), the birth of the feature (1912-1917), the coming of the code (1932-1937), and the McCarthy era (1946-1960) seem especially worth study now, and several historians are working on social histories of these periods at the present time. If I may offer a bit of prophecy, I believe that the social history will become the dominant fashion in film history for the next decade—perhaps as an understandable reaction to our previous overemphasis on the artistic history of the cinema, perhaps because we cannot really move further in examining the cinema's artistic history without more concrete and accurate knowledge of its social history.

The third major historical question that has been asked about the cinema is close to the social-cultural question, but differs slightly from it: what are the significant inventions and institutions that have affected the history of cinema production? In what ways did the institutions and inventions shape the content and style of the films? In what ways did the demands of cinema shape the methods of production? This history of cinema production and the film industry overlaps several of the issues of the cinema's cultural history—for, obviously, the film industry assumes an audience and that audience is a part of a society and culture. For this reason, Robert Sklar's cultural history treats several production issues. But a history of the film industry would emphasize the means and methods of producing films rather than the ways of receiving them and the cultural impact of that reception. It assumes that a film is a product of machines, of an industrial system, of financial pressures, and of collaborative contribution (which is true), rather than a product of a culture or a self-contained work of art (which it also is).

No other historical question about the cinema would seem to offer such solid and certain conclusions as those that examine the making of machines, the dealings of corporations, and the operation of edifices. How much more confident we ought to be able to feel about such matters than the vagaries of artistic inferences or conjectures about mass tastes. Unfortunately, however, the documents for this kind of cinema history either do not exist, cannot be examined impartially, or are highly suspect. Because so many production decisions were never committed to paper, and because so many take credit for so much invention, the historian must often depend on the memories or apocryphal stories of insiders or would-be insiders. Those concrete documents that do exist can usually only be scrutinized at the consent of the institu-

tion, a consent which would probably not be granted if, say, MGM felt that the historian might not love everything that MGM did. And the publications about the film industry—*Moving Picture World, Film Annual, Variety, Photoplay,* and so forth—are self-serving journals published by the industry either for the use of the industry or for the adoration of the industry's idolators.

For this reason, the classic study of this historical question, Terry Ramsaye's *A Million and One Nights* (originally published in 1926), begins more with a disclaimer than a premise. "This history is a tale for its own sake."[18] What Ramsaye meant was that although he often worked as a publicist for the film industry, this particular work was an independent effort, written at the request and behest of no employer but his own interest. Ramsaye only tells a partial truth. Since his book is devoted almost entirely to the pre-1915 cinema (he arrives at 1916 on page 741 of an 834-page text), the film industry that he serves in 1926 was, in effect, the one that replaced the film industry that he studies in his text. Further, Ramsaye's work seems saturated with a general idolization of everything and everyone that had anything to do with the film industry. It especially idolizes the making of money.

As a historical work, Ramsaye's mammoth volume poses two problems today. The first is that its author writes with the spirit of the journalist—his profession—rather than the historian. He details an anecdote in his preface about his first assignment as a reporter. His editor instructs him to go cover a crime: "Go find out who did it, when he did it, why he did it, and who he did it to."[19] Although Ramsaye's journalistic spirit does much for the dash and snap of his prose style—the book remains one of the best-written historical works we have—it leads directly to his second problem: that of his sources and documentation. It often seems questionable that his whos are really doing whatever, whenever, and why ever he says they are doing it.

Ramsaye explains that the sources in his documents, were of two kinds, both of them "original sources."[20] First, "contacts within the industry," meaning personal, oral interviews. Second, "previously unpenetrated strata of record,"[21] by which vagary he means the records and files of *Photoplay* magazine and other print resources. Although he assures us he has made "painstaking checks and verifications,"[22] and he probably has, as every good reporter should, the total lack of footnotes in the book that make specific references to

each piece of documentation makes it impossible for us to check and verify any of it. Despite this scholarly casualness, Ramsaye's history remains our best historical guide to the first twenty years of American film production, if only because it was written then rather than now.

One of the rare and recent books to essay a history of world cinema production is David Robinson's *The History of World Cinema.* Robinson admits that "the task of covering all movie history, from Lumière to Andy Warhol, from German Expressionism to the Cinema Novo of Brazil, from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Ghana and Viet Nam, is overwhelming."[23] He admits that "it is practically impossible even to estimate the number of films of all kinds made since 1895."[24] The result of treating the history of the aesthetics, technology, economy, and audience of cinema becomes a history not of cinema art or culture but of cinema production—what films were produced, where, by whom, for whom, and to what effect.

Robinson's documentation, organization, and proportioning mirror his premise. He organizes his work according to strict chronology, surveying each period internationally rather than treating different national cultures and traditions separately (as do Knight and myself). His index contains more film titles and more names than Knight's, Casty's, or my own—perhaps more than all three combined. He devotes perhaps 2500 words to a survey of D. W. Griffith's entire career—from 1908 through *The Birth of a Nation*—less than Casty or I devote to that single film itself. Another sign of Robinson's interest is that his treatment of cinema prehistory—the 75 years or so of invention that precede 1895—is probably the longest and most detailed survey of that era in any of the general histories of the cinema.

A metaphor that recurs in Robinson's preface is "sweep," as contrasted with metaphors like "high points," "key films," and "landmarks" in Knight's, Casty's, or my own. In reviewing Robinson's approach, Tim Lyons found this sweeping view of film-production history a valuable alternative to the aesthetic and authorial emphases in most of the other general surveys of cinema history to appear in the last two decades.[25] Lyons found it especially significant that Robinson had devoted only some sixteen lines to *Intolerance* and about the same or even less to the other artistic classics of cinema history. That fact is both the strength and the weakness of Robinson's sweeping summary of world cinema production. Although Robinson would seem to approach the comprehensiveness that so many critics want from a film history, what Robinson omits is both the artistic

power of individual works and the cultural impact of movies in general—two of the primary reasons for anyone's wanting to write or read a history of the cinema.

Like the social and cultural history of the cinema, the history of cinema production lends itself to more specific studies of individual inventions, institutions, and producers. C. W. Ceram's *Archaeology of the Cinema* limits itself to cinema prehistory exclusively—to the invention of the machines that would eventually produce cinema. Gordon Hendricks's *Beginnings of the Biograph* limits itself to the twelve or so months culminating in the invention of the Biograph Camera and projector. Using newspaper documentation—in particular, the relevant editions of the *Canastota Bee*—Hendricks's study is meticulously minute, but anyone expecting a glimpse of the early careers of Griffith and the Gish sisters would be sorely disappointed. Harry Geduld's recently published *The Birth of the Talkies* traces the steps leading to the 1927 Revolution, beginning with Edison's invention of the phonograph. We have only one history of a studio, Bosley Crowther's *The Lion's Share,* an authorized and sanctioned view of MGM, although I understand that a history of Paramount is presently in the works.

As for the American studios, there are glimpses of Columbia in both Bob Thomas's biography of Harry Cohn, and Frank Capra's autobiography, and glimpses of Fox in both Upton Sinclair's biography of William Fox, and Mel Gussow's biography of Daryl F. Zanuck. But the stories of RKO, Warner Brothers, and Universal are yet to be written. And what about such other institutions as Monogram, Republic, the Technicolor Corporation, the Glen Glenn sound studios, UFA, UPA, and the like? The four-volume history of British Film Production from 1894 to 1929 by Roger Manvell and Rachel Low is an admirably detailed account. But even with its limitation to the silent cinema and to a relatively minor producing country, it runs over two thousand pages.

There are other possible questions that might be raised about the history of the cinema, but most of these are subsumed within the major categories of artistic, social, or production history. A history of cinema styles would depend on individual films—on works of art—and on the evolution of audience tastes for its documentation. A history of cinema technology would revolve around issues of both art and industry. A history of cinema contributors—of those persons who contributed to cinema history—would depend on whether the

biographical subject were important to the cinema's art, to its cultural and social impact, or to its production and industry. In addition to the many biographies of film stars, directors, and producers—which range in quality from being reasonably careful, scholarly biographies to hardbound fan magazines and picture books—the American Film Institute's hundreds of oral histories promise to contain some interesting documents for further study. These soon-to-be-released interviews must, of course, be subjected to "painstaking checks and verifications," for the recollections of fallible human memories are no more certain and solid than any other kind of historical document. Although it is conceivable that someday a history of cinema ideas—of thinking about the cinema—might be written, only in the last decade or so have enough ideas about the cinema begun to develop to merit a history.

According to David Robinson, "It is every historian's ambition to capture the sweep of history. Unfortunately, history is inclined to leap, hobble, double back, repeat itself, stop still, and indeed do anything in the world but sweep."[26] To Robinson's caution about the wandering ways of history, I would add another about the wandering ways of historians, who are, after all, merely individual human beings with minds that are also inclined to leap or hobble or even sweep rather than scrutinize. The only way to accomplish the myth of totality—to recapture the totality of cinema history—will be with the total, the aggregate collection of cinema histories. The most that we can ask from each contribution to the total is that it raise a relevant and interesting question about the cinema's history, that it apply the question as deeply and/or as broadly as both the question and the documents require, and that it handle the documents as fully, as fairly, and as carefully as it can, so that its historical conclusion follows from the extant documents rather than seems to be thrust upon them.

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PROBLEMS IN FILM HISTORY: HOW FOX INNOVATED SOUND*

Douglas Gomery

The coming of sound to the American cinema, and subsequently to the rest of the world, provides an important demarcation in all histories of film. Yet relatively little is known about how this transition took place. Lack of data has been the major reason given for this paucity of historical specificity. The accounts we do have are based on a few, accessible sources. In one particular case, Fox's innovation of sound, this is certainly the case. A survey of 23 histories were found to use only two sources: Upton Sinclair's book and Edward Kellogg's article.[1] The longest account in the 23 histories covers Fox in eight pages, the usual runs only a line or two.[2] This reliance on two sources severely biases all these short discussions since Kellogg limited his presentation to the necessary inventions while Sinclair dealt primarily with Fox's trouble after talkies had proven successful. Precious little is known about the period in between, even though Fox pioneered a sound-on-film process still in use today.

Fortunately more data does exist, principally in court records: the American Tri-Ergon suits and William Fox's personal bankruptcy records. Neither case directly concerns the coming of sound, yet both provide testimony, correspondence, and records of Fox's quest to innovate Movietone. Secondly, important evidence also rests in the files of Halsey, Stuart, the investment house which funded Fox's expansion in the late 1920s. Finally there are the trade papers. *Variety*, *Moving Picture World*, *Motion Picture News*, and *Film Daily*. All, given their individual biases, provide

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important accounts of crucial events. Despite ease of access, previous historians have not drawn on any of these sources.

Availability of data in itself, however, should not define how we write history. A new approach and method is needed by which to structure any revisionist account. The economic theory of technological innovation deserves particular attention. Economists furnish historians with strong tools by which to structure accounts of industrial change. Profit maximization provides the motivation; the stages of change then include invention, innovation, and diffusion. After scientists create necessary inventions, entrepreneurs innovate new technologies to cut costs, increase revenues, or both. They must determine how best to adapt the system of inventions as a useful investment. In theory all motion picture industry leaders thought sound movies would draw large crowds, yet in the 1920s simple phonographic devices would never work in the new massive picture palaces. Any innovating firm would need a much improved sound system, skilled management, large amounts of financing, and most important, a strategy by which to crack the marketplace in a low cost, low risk manner. Once the majority of an industry accepts the new technology, diffusion begins and the rest of an industry adopts the new technology based on the experience of the innovators.[3]

I

Any innovation must be preceded by the creation of new inventions. Fox's sound-on-film process emerged because of the vitality of two independent scientists, not at all connected with the motion picture industry, and a specific need by the United States Navy during World War I. Theodore W. Case began experimenting with principles of sound during his senior year at Yale University in 1911. His goal was to create a new system of sound recording. Two years later, he built his own private laboratory in his hometown of Auburn, New York. He set as his immediate goal the development of light-sensitive substances to improve the Audion tube. Earl I. Sponable, a recent Cornell graduate, joined Case in 1916. One year later Case and Sponable had perfected the Thalofide Cell, an improved high-vacuum selenium tube. Immediately after the United States entered World War I, the Navy sought the services of the Case Laboratory, and asked Case and Sponable to employ their new Thalofide Cell to create an infrared signal and communication system. The war ended before Case and Sponable could complete their assigned task. With the curtailment of the funds for war activities in 1919, the Navy dropped the project.[4]

Case and Sponable had learned much about the communication of sound in their year of work for the Navy. They still needed, however, a better photoelectric cell for their system. As part of their work toward this goal, Case journeyed to see Lee DeForest in October 1922, one month after the latter had returned from a two-year stay in Germany. DeForest was then at work on his Phonofilm experiments. One month later, DeForest journeyed to the Case Lab in Auburn. DeForest's vision of recording sound on motion picture film inspired Case, who then turned all his efforts toward the creation of a system based on the Thalofide Cell. At this point DeForest cooperated completely with Case. The two scientists exchanged information and apparatus. In fact, DeForest employed Case's Thalofide Cell for Phonofilm's premiere on April 15, 1923. Four months later, DeForest Phonofilm, Inc., entered into a contract with the Case Laboratory for a commercial license for the Thalofide Cell and Case's new Aeo light.[5]

While DeForest tried to market his sound system, Case and Sponable began to improve their own. In 1923 they developed their first crude microphone, sound recorder, and amplifier. During the first eight months of 1924, they added their sound recording system to a standard Bell and Howell camera and greatly refined and improved a working reproduction system. By August 1924, Case had constructed a sound studio and screening room adjacent to his Auburn laboratory. One year later he and Sponable neared a marketable system.[6]

At first, Case thought he could sell his system in conjunction with DeForest. By 1925, however, the tempermental DeForest had become dissatisfied with the Aeo lamp, and concealed his latest developments from Case. When the formal Phonofilm, Inc./Case agreement expired in September 1925, the break was complete. Case then turned to Western Electric. He approached Edward B. Craft, Vice President of Western Electric. Craft explained that Western Electric had signed an exclusive contract with Warner Bros.' Vitaphone, Inc., and promoter Walter J. Rich earlier in that summer. Nevertheless, in December 1925, Craft and two associates visited the Case Laboratory, and saw and heard a demonstration. Craft was impressed and began to consider adding Case's patents to Western Electric's package. But after some consideration, he decided, with advice from his engineering staff, that Case's patents added nothing to the Western Electric system. Craft thus broke off negotiations with Case in January 1926. Rebuffed, Case decided to try a different approach. He would improve his amplifiers, and simultaneously sell his system directly to a large producer of motion pictures.[7]

II

Case would eventually link up with the Fox Film Corporation. This alliance would make good economic sense for both parties. Case would link with an established producer with international distribution. For Fox, sound would play a vital part in its rise toward the top of the American motion picture industry. In 1925, just prior to the alliance with Case, Fox Film was in the second tier of the industry. On top, dominating the industry, were Famous-Players, Loew's, and First National Studios, in that order. In the second tier came Producers Distributing Corporation (PDC), Warner Bros., Film Booking Office (FBO), Universal, and Fox. All had national distribution like the "Big Three," yet possessed on the average one-half the assets of their larger competitors, and owned almost no theatres. All five were caught in a dilemma. Either they had to invest large amounts of capital and grow, or remain static and continue to fight off "Big Three" threats of total monopoly.[8]

Four years later, the industry's structure had changed radically. RKO had absorbed FBO and PDC, and risen into the "Big Five." Universal had been conservative and expanded very little. Most importantly, Fox and Warner Bros. had grown into industry giants. Since Warner Bros. was first with sound, historians have recounted in much detail its innovative efforts. Yet in 1925, William Fox also had set as his goal the number one position in the industry. Fox Film and its theatre properties, here called Fox Theatres, were nearly equal in size by 1925. By the end of 1929, Fox Film's assets had quadrupled and Fox Theatre sextupled. Profits had grown even more. With the combined assets of almost $250 million, and profits of over $16 million, only Paramount remained larger.[9]

Fox's expansion began in the June of 1925. Holders of common stock were given a stock dividend of 235 percent in common stock and the rights to buy an additional 165 percent at $43 per share. This financial maneuver raised $6,600,000 in new capital. Budgets for films then grew and new personnel came on. For example, Courtland Smith took charge of newsreels, and sales manager Winfield Sheehan moved to Hollywood to take charge of feature film production.[10]

Simultaneously, Fox began acquiring and building new theatres. At that time Fox Film only owned 20 neighborhood theatres in the New York area. In July 1925, Fox Film purchased 34 percent of West Coast Theatres, houses in California, and in several other western states. This guaranteed Fox first-run theatres in the major markets of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Next, to insure outlets in other major cities, the basis of

the theatre monopolies of the 1930s and 1940s, Fox formed a new corporation, Fox Theatres. Although not tied contractually to Fox Film, William Fox and his closest relatives held a majority of the stock of both corporations.[11]

Fox Theatres expanded gradually into most major markets during 1926 and 1927. It acquired or built large first-run theatres in Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., Brooklyn, New York City, St. Louis, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Newark. The crowning glory of the new chain became the Roxy, acquired three months after its March 1927 opening. The cost of these new theatres amounted to more than $25 million. To finance this expansion, Fox tried a variety of New York investment houses. Dillon, Read, P. W. Chapman, and S. W. Straus, among others, helped at first. In late 1926, William Fox, dissatisfied with ties to New York bankers, met Harold L. Stuart, head of a Chicago investment house, Halsey, Stuart & Co. Almost at once Stuart agreed to finance the new theatres in St. Louis and Detroit. After that success, Halsey, Stuart financed the bulk of Fox's expansion during the rest of the decade. Because of this new alliance, the pace of growth accelerated in 1928. Halsey, Stuart financed a new headquarters studio in New York City for $1,700,000. The Hollywood studio was remodeled and improved at a cost of nearly $2 million. A 100-acre backlot was added in the Westwood section of Los Angeles. Fox, with its new size, control of theatres, and hence bargaining power, even managed to contract to show Fox's films in Paramount's Publix theatres. Clearly, Fox was a company on the move.[12]

III

In 1925, Fox was still a relatively small corporation. Case and Sponable approached the larger, more established concerns first. In December 1925, they spoke to John J. Murdock of the Keith-Albee vaudeville circuit. Murdock had just acquired Pathe, Inc. Case followed DeForest's sales approach. He argued his sound system could record what vaudeville and motion picture theatres already presented, musical and comic acts, and orchestral accompaniments but more efficiently and cheaply. The best talent could "appear" all over the country at once. Sponable later recounted the reaction of the executives of Keith-Albee:

> [They were] very much disturbed to think that [anyone] would dare bring up the subject of talking pictures to them again. They admitted that they had been stung on the thing twice, once about fifteen years ago where they invested con-

> ...derable money in the stock of a talking picture outfit, and later in certain connections with the DeForest Company. The Vice President of the Keith Company [Murdock] stated positively that they were not interested in talking motion pictures.[13]

Murdock's reaction proved to be typical, for none of the representatives of the "Big Three" expressed any interest in Case's new inventions. The link with Fox came because Courtland Smith thought sound newsreels would be very profitable. In the fall of 1925, Smith sent his engineering assistant, John Joy, to the Case Lab. Joy had known Sponable at Cornell. Joy returned a very favorable report and in June 1926, Smith arranged a demonstration for William Fox. Like Harry Warner, Fox was greatly impressed by the invention's ability to record vaudeville acts. Two weeks later, Case installed his recording and reproduction equipment in a temporary studio set up in the annex of the Fox building. Case, Sponable, and Joy tested and adapted the apparatus for commercial use. Their progress satisfied both Fox and Smith, and on July 23, 1926, the Fox-Case Corporation became a legal entity. Case turned all his patents over to the new corporation. Courtland Smith became its general manager, and Earl Sponable became head of engineering.[14]

Smith delayed any formal announcement of the new alliance until he and Fox devised a strategy for innovation. Their first actions were defensive. In September 1926, Lee DeForest discovered the Fox-Case amalgamation and threatened suit. On September 23, Smith and Fox negotiated a month's option to buy 120,000 shares of DeForest Phonofilm stock at $21 per share, a total cost of more than $2,400,000. Fox-Case paid $1000 for the option. In October, Fox-Case took a second month's option for $100,000, but before the second option expired, Smith discovered DeForest did not have complete control over his patents. Fox-Case sued to recover the $101,000; DeForest counter-sued for patent violation. Fox-Case held the stronger position and the matter was quietly settled out of court.[15]

Fox-Case was safe, but still lacked a quality amplification system. Smith first approached General Electric (GE). He negotiated a license with its chairman of the board, Owen D. Young. The papers were prepared and announcements readied. But Young would not sign without the approval of David Sarnoff, then head of GE's commercial agent for broadcasting, RCA. At the time, Sarnoff was out of the country. When he returned, Sarnoff convinced Young that General Electric should go on its own, compete with Western Electric, sign the large movie producers, and thus extend GE's and RCA's commercial territory to include talking pictures. Young agreed, terminated the negotiations with Fox, and assigned

Sarnoff the task of commercially exploiting GE's sound system. Smith would have to search elsewhere for the necessary amplifiers.[16]

Smith approached Western Electric. At this point, late in 1926, Vitaphone, Inc. held exclusive control for such licenses. On December 31, 1926, Vitaphone granted a sublicense to Fox-Case. This agreement was identical to the earlier Western Electric-Vitaphone license; Fox-Case would pay Vitaphone the standard eight percent of its gross revenues.[17] Fox-Case also guaranteed a minimum royalty for 1927 of $20,000; for 1928, $30,000; for 1929, $37,500; for 1930, $50,000. After that, the amount would increase by ten percent per year until a maximum of $88,578. This committed Fox-Case to royalties of almost $1,200,000 during the next eighteen years. In addition, the agreement extended to Fox-Case all rights under Vitaphone's contracts with musical artists. In a supplementary letter, Fox-Case cross-licensed all its patents with those of Western Electric.[18]

There remained only one more threat to Fox-Case's patent position. The German company, Tri-Ergon A.G., controlled important sound-on-film patents in many European countries. Smith contacted Tri-Ergon and arranged for a demonstration. Tri-Ergon offered Fox Film a six-month option for the non-German (rest of the world) rights. Fox had until June 30, 1927, to decide.[19] During that spring, Fox and Smith sought advice from Western Electric. Engineering and legal experts from Western Electric thoroughly analyzed the Tri-Ergon system and advised Fox that from Western Electric's point of view, the Tri-Ergon rights had only limited value. However, one Western Electric manager, Whitford Drake, thought the American rights did have some potential use. They could check the activities of the DeForest Phonofilm Corporation. Drake, therefore, recommended that Fox exercise his option for the American rights. Fox did so on July 5, 1927; he paid $50,000. Then he dropped any further consideration of world rights. Fox had now removed all obstacles which could create patent difficulties.[20]

Now, Fox-Case could assault the marketplace. Fox had begun to sign up and record vaudeville acts as early as October 1926. Sir Harry Lauder was the first. In January 1927, William Fox ordered 25 reproduction apparatuses installed in Fox Theatres' growing chain. On February 4, Roxy announced his new theatre would have Fox Movietone equipment.[21] Three weeks later, Fox-Case held its first demonstration for the press. It began at 10:00 A.M. Fifty newspaper representatives went to the studio and had Movietone recordings made of themselves. Then, at 2:00 P.M., before the regular showing of *What Price Glory* at the Harris Theatre,

the reporters saw Movietone shorts of a banjo and piano routine, a short comedy number, and three songs by Raquel Meller.[22] But all this activity proved premature, for Courtland Smith now began to reconsider Fox's innovation strategy. Warner Bros.' programs of vaudeville shorts and synchronized scores for silent feature films were attracting smaller and smaller crowds. Smith needed a unique, but still viable alternative. Soon he realized how Fox-Case could complement Warner Bros.' efforts, and employ Smith's own expertise. He convinced William Fox to drop vaudeville shorts for the time being and concentrate on outdoor newsreels. Thus, Fox-Case could differentiate its product from that of Vitaphone, and fill an unoccupied part of the market. Moreover, it would provide an inexpensive method by which Fox-Case could perfect new techniques and test the market response.[23]

It took Fox-Case a full year to develop the necessary equipment, train the cameramen, and record interesting subjects. The public premier came on April 30, 1927, at the Roxy: marching cadets at West Point.[24] Lasting only four minutes, this sound newsreel drew enthusiastic response from both the press and the public. On May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh left for Paris at 7:52 A.M.; that evening, Fox Movietone News had newsreel footage with sound in the Roxy. The 6200 people in the audience stood and cheered. In June, Movietone News recorded Lindbergh's reception in Washington. This sound newsreel lasted ten minutes. Both Mourdant Hall of the *New York Times* and an unnamed *Variety* critic reported that this newsreel carried an otherwise weak Roxy show.[25] During the summer, Movietone newsreel cameramen gathered sound footage around the world. They recorded aviators, harmonica contests, Admiral Byrd, Al Smith, and Benito Mussolini. The latter spoke both Italian and English.[26] Newspaper columnists and other commentators praised the educational value and wide appeal of these subjects. In the fall of 1927, Courtland Smith made sound newsreels the standard at all Fox-owned theatres.[27] That October, he set a regular release rate of one per week. By the end of 1927, Fox Movietone had a permanent newstaff and cameramen stationed in all parts of the world.[28]

With this favorable response, Smith and William Fox decided to increase production of vaudeville shorts and scored features. Until then, Fox-Case had released only a handful of sound vaudeville shorts and one scored feature, *Sunrise*. The two executives moved quickly. By the first of the year they had signed several major vaudeville artists (including Eddie Cantor), filmed more then ten vaudeville shorts, and even planned a part-talkie feature, *Blossom Time*. To meet these new production demands, Fox began the construction of a new Hollywood studio. Early in March

1928, William Fox announced that twenty-five percent of next season's features would contain Movietone sequences. In May he would declare that all of the 1928-1929 products would be Movietoned. Simultaneously, Fox had wired, as quickly as possible, all the houses in his ever-expanding theatre chain. The innovation of sound seemed to be a success; large profits loomed on the horizon.[29]

On May 11, 1928, Paramount, Loew's, United Artists, and First National signed with Western Electric for sound recording and reproduction rights. All the other major American film studios soon followed Paramount's lead. Fox, with Warner Bros., was well ahead at this point. It needed only to slightly adjust its contract with Western Electric to be in line with its new rivals.[30] The film industry now raced toward complete diffusion of sound films.

Fox continued to concentrate and lead in the area of newsreels. As its competitors braved the switch-over during the summer of 1928, Fox Movietone News increased its weekly issues to two per week. Fox had 27 Movietone units covering the world. By September, it could request a 5-year contract from any exhibitor desiring Movietone News. Many chains signed up; only Paramount and Loew's had the resources to resist.[31] Fox continued to expand. By October it had 40 separate crews producing its two editions. By the end of 1928 there were 50, with 35 in the United States and 15 covering the rest of the world. Nine months later, Fox was releasing four different newsreels per week, and had 70 crews in action. It even opened the first all-newsreel theatre, the Embassy, in New York's Times Square. Still, Fox continued to produce silent newsreels until the end of the 1929-1930 season to accommodate unwired theatres.[32]

Fox, despite its long lead in sound newsreels, always tailed Warner Bros. in the conversion to all-sound feature films. Warner Bros. had switched completely to all-sound films by September of 1928; Fox did not release its first all-talking feature until four months later. By then, even Paramount and Loew's had caught up. Yet, it took only six more months for Fox to totally convert to the production of all-sound features. In this respect, Fox matched the conversion rate of Paramount and Loew's, and led all others by several months, except, of course, Warner Bros. For vaudeville shorts, Fox was the only firm that could compete with Warner Bros. in the summer of 1928. Yet, it soon found this market offered too little profit; Warner Bros. had all the available talent under contract. Consequently, Fox soon phased out production of these shorts and released its last in May 1929. It released only seven in the 1929-1930 season, all earlier productions. Only the giants, Paramount and M-G-M, found it profitable to compete with Warner Bros.[35]

IV

Based on its previous expansion, the popularity of its sound films pushed Fox toward the top of the motion picture industry in terms of earning power. In 1929, it grossed over $13 million, twice the total of the previous year. Fox continued to expand. In 1928, with Halsey, Stuart's help, Fox Theatres purchased the Poli chain of 15 theatres in key New England towns, and Fox Film acquired full ownership of West Coast Theatres, and with it, one-third control of First National. John Otterson of Western Electric helped Fox acquire part of the funding for the West Coast deal. He knew Fox's take-over would mean an immediate order for sound equipment for 282 theatres. On October 28, 1928, Fox opened Movietone City, the first new all-sound studio complex built after Warner Bros.' studio. The $10 million plant had taken 1500 men working in three shifts, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, four months to build.[34]

Rapid growth continued in 1929. In February, Fox Theatres acquired 150 more theatres in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In September, came the Atlanta Fox. By the fall of 1929, Fox Film and Fox Theatres had accumulated over 532 theatres in the United States, and over 450 in foreign countries. However, the greatest opportunity for growth came when Marcus Loew died and his widow and sons inherited almost one-third of the stock of Loew's. Soon after, in the middle of 1928, the Loew family indicated that their share of this corporate empire was for sale. There were really only four parties who could afford such a purchase; at the current market price, the stock was worth nearly $28 million. Neither RCA nor Paramount were interested. That left Fox and Warner Bros. Harry Warner and his chief financial advisor, Waddill Catchings of Wall Street's Goldman, Sachs, approached the Loew family and opened negotiations. However, Warner and Catchings could not negotiate a deal because William Fox entered the bidding and always offered more.[35]

As soon as it became clear Fox would acquire the Loew family stock, Nicholas Schenck, president of Loew's, Inc., and David Bernstein, Loew's vice-president, offered to sell their shares. Fox wanted majority control; thus Schenck and Bernstein sought other stockholders and created a pool of stock that, with the Loew family, would nearly equal a majority. Fox would acquire the rest on the open market. Fox, Schenck, and Bernstein kept their negotiations very secret. If others found out, the open market price would go up and greatly alter the terms of trade. Fox's final bid was $125 per share, of which the Loew family and other members of the pool received $102.50, while Schenck and Bernstein earned $22.50 extra, per

share, for negotiating the expanded deal. Thus, the pool holders would split $41 million while Schenck and Bernstein pocketed $9 million extra.[36]

Fox now had to secure the necessary $50 million to finance this incredible takeover. Fox turned to John Otterson and Harold Stuart. He requested a $12 million loan from Western Electric. Fox knew John Otterson would want Fox to purchase the stock, for when he did, Fox would order apparatus for all the Loew's theatres. Otterson convinced his superiors to grant this unusual request.[37]

Fox next turned to Harold Stuart for help in raising the remaining $35 million. Stuart granted a $10 million direct loan to Fox, and with the help of Edgar S. Bloom, President of Western Electric, arranged for $6 million more from the Chatham-Phoenix National Bank and Trust Company. William Fox was a director of Banker's Security Company of Philadelphia, and secured $10 million from them. Fox and Stuart arranged the rest, and $7 million extra, through the transfer of stock from Fox Film to Fox Theatres. Only one step remained. Fox contacted William Donovan, Assistant United States Attorney General, to secure a guarantee that no Federal antitrust action would be instituted. Donovan saw no problem in the proposed merger. Fox Theatres, not Fox Film, was buying the Loew's stock. There existed no conflict of interest because Fox Theatres was then relatively small.[37]

On February 21, 1928, Fox purchased the 400,000 shares from Schenck's pool. Fox now possessed majority control. On March 3, 1928, Fox told the public of his latest acquisition. The Fox-Loew's combination became the largest in the motion picture industry, surpassing even Paramount. The new company had assets over $200 million, and an annual earnings potential of $20 million. It controlled over 800 theatres in the best locations. This takeover surpassed in both size and scope the creation of RKO, and Warner Bros.' acquisition of Stanley and First National. It was the largest in industry history. In four short years, Fox had innovated a new sound system and pioneered sound newsreels, while creating the world's largest motion picture empire.[38]

V

Fox's innovation of sound was a rational addition to his growing empire. In many respects, the Fox experience paralleled its predecessor, Warner Brothers.[39] Like Western Electric, Case sought entry into the motion picture industry through larger concerns before he turned to Fox. In both

cases, merger came because of the advocacy of one man. In Warner Bros.' case it was Samual Warner; in Fox's experience it was Courtland Smith. Yet, for both companies, sound, at first, played a small role in overall expansion. The new theatres, and larger production facilities helped both take full advantage of the expanded revenues when the public began to attend sound films in large numbers. Both Warner Bros. and Fox needed large amounts of new financing for their expansion. Goldman, Sachs supplied Warner Bros.; Fox received help from many investment houses and banks, but Halsey, Stuart provided the bulk of the new funds.

Yet there were key differences. Since Warner Bros. had begun almost a year earlier than Fox toward innovation of sound, Fox needed an alternative plan. Courtland Smith's skilled management provided one. Smith focused Fox's efforts on newsreels. They were cheap, their production easily adjusted (or terminated) in the short run, and they could provide a useful gauge of the popularity of the new "talkies." The newsreels proved to be very successful. Thus, Fox and Winfield Sheehan slowly increased Fox's output of vaudeville shorts and sound features. Fox's new products were so popular playing in Fox's new theatres that the company grew from a middle-sized member of the industry's second tier into a giant even larger than Paramount. Fox could even take over the industry's second most prosperous firm, Loew's. Of course, Fox reached the acme of its power during the spring and summer of 1929. As other historians have chronicled, Fox's fall was a rapid and complex process during the first years of the Great Depression. Yet, despite these setbacks, Fox Film, and its successor, Twentieth Century Fox, has remained an industry giant since those expansionary days in the late 1920s.

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Notes

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28. *Moving Picture World*: 1 December 1927, p. 8; 3 December 1927, pp. 12-13; *Variety*, 30 November 1927, pp. 18-19.

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30. *New York Times*, 16 May 1928, p. 18; *Variety*, 16 May 1928, passim; Electrical Research Products, Inc. v. Vitaphone Corporation, 171 A. 738 (1934), Affidavit of John E. Otterson, pp. 192-197; Gomery, "The Coming of Sound," p. 252.

31. Kann, *Yearbook–1929*, p. 501; *Variety*: 1 August 1928, p. 16; 1 August

1928, p. 21; 22 August 1928, p. 28; 12 September 1928, p. 10; 26 September 1928, p. 17.

32. *Variety*: 3 October 1928, p. 12; 28 November 1928, p. 22; 20 March 1929, p. 7; 28 November 1928, p. 22; 5 December 1928, p. 7; 20 March 1929, p. 7; Raymond Fielding, *The American Newsreel*, 1911-67, (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), pp. 185, 200-201.

33. Gomery, "The Coming of Sound," pp. 254-261.

34. *New York Times*, 28 October 1928, p. 7; *Variety*: 7 November 1928, p. 5; 28 November 1928, p. 19; 27 June 1928, p. 51; 10 October 1928, p. 5; 1 February 1928, pp. 5, 25; *Barrons*, 28 September 1928, p. 8; U.S. Federal Communications Commission. *Staff Report on the Investigation of the Telephone Industry in the United States*, (House Document 340, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939), Volume II, p. 474; *Barrons*, 30 August 1928, p. 20; *Motion Picture News*, 28 January 1928, p. 265; "Fox-New England Theatres, Inc., Supplementary Memorandum, 10 September 1928," Fox-Folder 11, Bache-Halsey, Stuart Library, Chicago, Illinois.

35. *Variety*, 6 March 1929, pp. 5, 10; U.S. v. Fox Theatres, Eq. 51-122, Answer for Fox Film Corporation, pp. 25-26; "The Case of William Fox," *Fortune*, May, 1930, pp. 49-108, *Motion Picture News*, 12 January 1929, p. 82; "An Analysis of Fox Theatres Corporation, 2 August 1929," pp. 1-2, Fox-Folder 19, Bache-Halsey, Stuart Library, Chicago, Illinois; Gomery, "The Coming of Sound," pp. 330-331.

36. *Variety*, 6 March 1929, pp. 5, 10; *Barrons*, 11 March 1929, p. 11; Sinclair, *Fox*, p. 75; "Case, " *Fortune*, May, 1930, pp. 49, 108; *Film Daily*, 1 March 1929, p. 1.

37. FCC, *Staff Report*, Volume II, pp. 475-478; "Case," *Fortune*, May, 1930, pp. 49, 108; *Motion Picture News*, 2 March 1929, p. 611.

38. Sinclair, *Fox*, pp. 75-76; FCC, *Staff Report*, Volume II, p. 477; "Case," *Fortune*, May, 1930, p. 108; William Fox, "Answer," pp. 18-19, Fox-Folder 17, Bache-Halsey, Stuart Library.

39. For a detailed analysis of Warner Bros.' experience, see Gomery, "The Coming of Sound," pp. 118-174.

TO ANALYZE, TO SEGMENT

Raymond Bellour

1/47

The film begins. Paris, Bois de Boulogne Avenue des Acacias. The coryphaeus (commentator) of the musical comedy presents himself and half-speaking, half-singing, announces his theme: "Little Girls." A theme soon centered on the apparition which calls it into being. "This story is about a little girl in particular. . . Her name is Gigi." Gigi enters and floats off, opening the theme of the narrative which takes her name.

The film ends. The theme is repeated: same game, same place, same shot. But this time, behind the commentator a couple appears; it appears in another time, a mythic time, as if beyond the narrative, since it is in fact its solution: Gigi, accompanied by her husband Gaston.

The classic cinema (especially the classic American cinema) knows well these rhyming effects; they are, to be precise, what constitute it. These effects sustain the difference of the narrative across an ordered reservoir of similarities; they flash, by the unfolding of symmetries (more or less refined as the case may be), the dissymmetry without which there could be no narrative. From beginning to end, the classic film ceaselessly repeats itself because it leads to its resolution. This is the reason why its beginning and its end often reflect each other with ultimate insistence. The film acknowledges itself as a result, by inscribing the systematic condition of its itinerary, by giving us its signature with a final flourish, presenting the operation which built it piece by piece.

The effect of repetition-resolution has a specific nature, although it is very common—therein resides all its force. It operates globally, and very precisely, from segment to segment, that is to say from one large narrative unit to another, from one syntagmatic unit to another.

But what constitutes in reality a segment for the analysis of a film? Which is to ask, with what truth or with what practicality do the "large syntagmatic categories of the image track" endow the definition of the segment and the act of analysis?

Concerning Syntagmatic Categories

Much has been written about the Large Syntagmatic. For it, against it, growing out of it. For it: in France and especially in the U.S. with what is perhaps excessive servitude. Against it: most recently with a real lack of intellectual generosity or of intellectual imagination. I will not go over the debate. I will assume you are familiar with the Large Syntagmatic. Still, I wish to retrace, in order to better situate my own direction, the movement which the Large Syntagmatic effects in the thought of Christian Metz.

The establishment of the Large Syntagmatic blends two complementary movements, determined by the logic of discovery: we are in 1966, only two years after the striking point of departure of "Cinema: Language or Language System?" *First Movement*: the attempt is made, through *a* code, *this* code, to show that there are codes; that codicity, in cinema, has no less efficiency than in other fields, and that one can try to master it there, to put it into play. A point which none of the classifications, taxonomies, or charts of types of montage, etc., either far too formal or informal, could show before then. In this way, the Large Syntagmatic is a sort of theoretical operator: it actualizes the concrete possibility of a semiotics of cinema, since it potentially materializes it. *Second Movement*: this specific code seems to be, from a logical as well as a historical point of view, the code which permits to bring to light (through a closed series of commutable syntagmatic types), the cultural establishment of film as the support of fiction.

The combined force of these two movements explains how Metz could fall partially into the trap, or the illusion (soon to be exposed), of having found *the* code of cinema. Almost immediately (thereafter) the Large Syntagmatic is no longer *the* code, but simply a specific code among others (this will be the position repeatedly taken in *Language and Cinema*). But this ambiguity is crucial; for if the Large Syntagmatic is not more or less than a code among other codes which are juxtaposed to it and run through it, it envelops the other codes; and in a literal sense, this code is superior to them: forcibly, as the consequence and condition of the fiction.

Ever since the beginning, or almost, the Large Syntagmatic comprised a

patient and rigorous self-criticism on Metz's part; its elaboration was submitted to internal contradictions which (according to an ultimately improbable logic) undermine, in a sense, the initial positivism of the code, but which add to its potential force. From his very first writings in *Film Language*, Metz confronted three fundamental objections. First, the distinction between the autonomous shot and the seven other syntagmatic categories: the shot-sequence (as its name indicates) contains within itself, through a sort of spatio-temporal expansion, all the possibilities contained in the seven other types; the shot sequence therefore imposes the necessity of reworking the initial chart, dividing it into two branches. Secondly, there is a discrepancy in the seven other syntagmatic types between those which are "hard" and "fast" and those which are "less clear." (This discrepancy becomes evident in the syntagmatic analysis of *Adieu Philippines*.) For example, the bracket syntagma and the diegetic insert are said to be "distinct" configurations which are easily recognized and unmistakable, while the ordinary sequence and the scene are said to have "vague contours"—Metz says it is sometimes difficult "to isolate them from the general filmic flow." Thirdly, and this seems to me the most important point: "all the problems raised by alternation" which can not simply be resolved by the two complementary formulas—the a-chronological formula of the alternating syntagma. Metz writes: "The solution would be perhaps the introduction of a semiotically rigorous theory which would take into account two facts which are both very evident in films, but as yet poorly accounted for: First, the phenomenon which we can call the transformation of an insert (an autonomous segment with a single insert can be 'transformed' into an autonomous segment comprised of multiple inserts and thus into a type of *alternating syntagma*). . . Secondly the distinction between *true alternation* (which establishes a narrative branching, or doubling in the film) and *pseudo-alternation* (which is only a visual alternation within a unified space, or else is derived from a vaguely alternating aspect inherent in the film subject under certain circumstances)."

Finally, we come to a *Third Movement*, which logically grows out of the first two: through the methodical, expanded study which comprises *Language and Cinema*, this code really becomes a code; that is to say, radically detached from the filmic text, the various categories become only abstract entities evidenced in the film in the concrete form of the autonomous segment.

This concept was integral to the formulation of the three criteria of demarcation of the autonomous segment, which Metz undertook in an article written soon after the one on the Large Syntagmatic. He says: "The

analyst of the classic film is correct to consider as a single autonomous segment any passage from a film which is not interrupted by a major change in the course of the intrigue nor by a sign of punctuation nor by the abandonment of one syntagmatic type for another." Thus the question of the autonomous segment has been deliberately transposed to consideration in the text, that is to say, towards its imperative intercodicity, towards textual analysis.

Having recently discussed this with Metz, I know that he now feels that a new version of the Large Syntagmatic is possible. (You will ask: "Why not do it then, if it's possible?" I think, simply, because science always rests on desire, and desire is displaced—as Freud discovered. Only the scientific utopist can believe that one always attempts to finish—at least within a practical time—everything which is begun.) This new version of the Large Syntagmatic would have to overturn the positivist illusions which often accompany formalization in its initial stage. It would equally guard against the new positivism that the evolution of linguistics could throw over film theory by trying to substitute too simplistically the generative and transformational model for the structural model. By protecting itself equally against both, the new version would be able to combine their advances. It would challenge the plurality of levels which forbids the strict Chomskyan model from ever rejoining its object, the film, in the singularity of its textual system. Cinema will never be a language, nor film a grammar. It's not by chance that the poetic and musicological analyses of Nicholas Ruwet owe so much, if not more, to the structural model than they do to the generative and transformational model. But on the other hand, this new version of the Large Syntagmatic should possess increasing abstraction which would permit it to definitively erase any structural effect of flattening, of descriptive application between the code and the text, and finally to mitigate the insufficiencies of the previous effort. The new Large Syntagmatic would have to constitute a collection of spatio-temporal matrices where the present syntagmatic types would be arranged with their necessary complements and modifications in an ordered series.

The surface level, the textual actualization, would then alone merit the name of autonomous segment, offering the analysis the singularity, continually renewed, of an exact decomposition of the filmic chain.

This very particular situation of the Large Syntagmatic, this problematic code, unfinished, in one sense first and foremost code, in another a code among others, seems to have had two opposite consequences in the field of filmic analysis. First, numerous studies have been formulated which developed directly from the Large Syntagmatic sometimes strictly

applying the code, sometimes seeking to perfect it, by trying to diversify, to enrich or to make more flexible one or another of the categories (but always remaining within the bounds of Metz's own self-criticism, which implies a transformation). These studies have reaffirmed the determining richness of the code, its capacity for stylistic and historic induction, its specific instrumentality, its practical and analytical function in textual study of large narrative units.

Also, several textual analyses which have been developed as part of the effort to establish a semiology of cinema, with more or less explicit references to Metz, found themselves not ignoring, but skirting the proof of the syntagmatic categories. Some of them, because they isolate a segment or fragment of a film in order to consider smaller units. Others, because they evaluate, taking into account several segments or fragments, their functioning in the productivity of the text as a whole.

Efforts which consider an entire film situate themselves more or less intentionally in the perspective defined by Metz as that of the global textual system. Here I am purposely grouping together works of varied intentions and nature. *Foetus astral* by Jean Monod and Jean-Paul Dumont, the collective text by Cahiers du Cinema on *Young Mr. Lincoln*, the book by Claude Bailblé, Michel Marie and Marie-Claire Ropars on *Muriel*, Stephen Heath's long study of *Touch of Evil*, and my own analysis of *North by Northwest*. The detour is remarkable in these last two examples as the development of the analyses (otherwise quite different) both depended on segmentation; a sort of rough, or at least partially rough segmentation, which justifies Heath's note following his *decoupage*: "The segmentation here operates at the level of the narrative signified according to the simple criteria of unity of action, unity of characters, unity of place; it has no analytic status other than that of allowing reference to the film as narrative." What is evident in these two analyses is the fact that they do not cease to touch the Large Syntagmatic without seeking to constrain it and certainly without running the risk of being constrained by it.

This is the risk I shall try to take now. Working from the syntagmatic categories and well beyond them, it seems to me I can show you the systematic modelization of narrative units in the classic American film. Perhaps *Gigi*, which I present here, does not aim at filling the gap between the present state of the Large Syntagmatic and a second still unrealized state. Certainly this analysis will situate, and project the gap through the logic of its own movement. But nothing more. The Large Syntagmatic is thus fully used here (this is to say through its lacks) as

operator in the analysis: first, through the effect of descriptive logification operating within it; and then, through the syntagmatic solicitation which it opens, by the fact it incites to a generalized diegetic segmentality. Segmentation, as we shall see, is a mise-en-abyme, a process which theoretically is infinite—which is not to say that it lacks meaning. By the shifted play which operates between its different levels, segmentation permits us to sense the increased plurality of textual effects.

But this analysis is only a beginning and by definition, in the limited form of this presentation, it is much more the framing of an analysis, its placing into perspective, than the analysis itself. I am largely limited (and on the level of small units, very minimally limited) to the enumeration of rhyming effects, that is to say the effects of differential repetition which structure the development of the narrative. Previous analyses have shown me the fundamental determination of these effects in the constitution of the classic film, on the level of the fragment, the segment, or the entire film.

It seems striking to me to have them appear, in this crossing of the levels which is done here. But, things being as they are, I can only classify the rhyming effects, enumerate them; cannot produce them within the logic of their textual progression, the material work of their unfolding: analysis is not reducible to its frame. Intellectual imagination, mine, yours, must give to the elements which I will decompose the space which forms and constitutes them: their textual volume.

Segmental

The syntagmatic decomposition of *Gigi* which causes 47 autonomous segments to appear in the image-track of *Gigi* (numbers 1-47 in the summarizing table at the end of the article) calls for certain remarks:

a) The major effect of redundancy between the three criteria of demarcation manifests here a high degree of classicalness.
b) In this sound film, this musical film in particular, the image is sovereign as concerns the segmental demarcation. The sung numbers are smaller or equal to the segmental limits, with one exception: Gigi's song ("I don't understand the Parisians") which crosses segments 9 and 10, creating a sort of autonomous sound segment. The voice, the dialogues are strictly submitted to the phenomenology of the image, its temporal

partition. As for the music, if the musical dissolves sometimes do not coincide with the visual dissolves of segmental demarcation, they still globally reinforce, since they are tied to the songs, the dominance of the autonomous segments of the image-track. The Large Syntagmatic of the image-track in the classic film, due to the force of the diegesis (story) itself, is, therefore, not far from being *the* code, the one which permits the others.

c) This strict application of the Large Syntagmatic is confronted by one major difficulty: the impossibility of taking into account, in a film which significantly contains no alternating syntagmas, of the alternances which structure numerous segments. These segments (1, 8, 13, 15, 17, 21- an episodic sequence which is at the same time an alternating syntagma, but without simultaneity between the temporal series as in the example of an alternating syntagma in *Adieu Philippines* from which Metz raises the question of alternation) 24, 25, 26 (in which the segmental level loses a true scene by Honoré and Mamita) 30, 35, (a bastardized episodic sequence, of which the first two episodes are a brief form of alternating syntagma) and 47.

As for the autonomous shot, despite its frequency (9 segments) it does not pose severe problems here because these particular autonomous shots fully remain within the classical model.

This decomposition manifests two arrangements essential to the development of textual logic.

First, the large number of repetitions, of rhymes which operate from segment to segment, inside the mirror effect of segments 1 and 47. This obviously, does not concern their syntagmatic forms. The syntagmatic type, on this level, is only one characteristic among others, even though profoundly different: as is a specific index of the textual surface it affects, the form through which pertinences of relative importance are inscribed in the cinematic signifier. These pertinences are such that their systematic arrangement in each segment carries the narration from segment to segment.

a) One only has to look at the summarizing diagram to recognize the operations which bring unity, a sort of repetition full of differences, between the segments:

4 and 37
6, 16, and 20
7 and 31

8, 28, and 29
14 and 40
15 and 41-42
19, 27, and 32
23 and 46
24, 25, and 26
36 and 39

b) Some of these operations, starting with segment 36, concern many of the last segments of the film (37, 39, 40, 41-42, 46, 47). This concentration is notable: it shows how the film, through its segmental partition, resolves by repeating, by a sort of generalized narrative condensation, which carries it formally towards its end.

But these effects of repetition-resolution are inscribed within the limits of the autonomous segments in order to overcome them in many ways. Even if the classic film, as Metz points out, leans towards the sequence (the autonomous segment) rather than the shot, it does so in favor of an equally profound tendency, which inscribes the segment in a system of narrative commutation with units both larger and smaller than the segment, decoupling the effects of segmentation of the filmic chain. These two simultaneous movements attract and repulse, contradict and complement each other: it's what makes it necessary and yet difficult to distinguish them; their confusion (which is nonetheless decomposable) which turns film into the space of a generalized segmentality, is a fundamental condition which transforms the filmic surface into a textual volume.

Suprasegmental/Subsegmental

The classic film is thus marked by a tendency towards units which are often superior to the segment (suprasegment or macrosegment). These units are often called sequences (in every day as well as professional language), and they often correspond to units in the scenario. They are generally determined by a global unity of time, place, and action—for example, in *Gigi* all three segments (24, 25, and 26) take place in Trouville, in the course of one day, with the same characters (creating a kind of episodic suprasegment). Segments 12 and 13 constitute another kind of suprasegment. Segment 12 is a short autonomous shot depicting the facade of the ice-skating palace (we see neither Gaston nor Gigi but know that they are

going towards the building and are about to enter); segment 13 is a scene taking place inside. But the unity of place does not necessarily determine a segment, when narrative movements prove too dissimilar despite the transitions which bind them. Thus it seems justifiable not to combine segment 27, which depicts Alicia talking Mamita into speeding up Gigi's education, and segments 28 and 29 (VII) which are devoted to these pedagogical sessions. The suprasegment is a single minor dramatic flow; this explains how it can in other cases encompass several different locations: thus segments 3, 4, 5, and 6 (III) which concern Gaston's and Honore's meeting, or segments 30 and 31 (XXVI) which present in continuity the contradictory reactions of Gaston to Gigi's transformation.

The determination of suprasegments is obviously less rigorous than the determination of autonomous segments, because it is not indicated by any cinematic specificity, but rather depends on the force of the textual system. Thus it is totally derived from the singularity of each film, and conditioned by the analysis which turns it into an intermediary function between the segments and the major divisions (A, B, C, D, E, in the case of *Gigi*) which block out the overall dramaturgy of the narrative. As is the case with all efforts of textual *decoupage*, the interest of suprasegments is primarily descriptive; they serve to isolate rhyme effects which otherwise are merged or superimposed with the functioning of the autonomous segments. Following a sort of internal tautology, segments connected in a suprasegment rhyme strongly within this new unit. What is notable about this operation is how it concentrates the rhyming effects in the narrative succession. This is the case in the examples cited above: segments 24, 25, and 26, the "sequences" which all take place at Trouville, held together by the same characters; and segments 28 and 29 which group together the two episodic sequences of Gigi's education in Alicia's apartment. But more eloquent examples of suprasegmental rhyme are built over the course of the film from one suprasegment to another: the only clear example is the two groups of segments occurring in Maxim's, which combines in suprasegment VIII, segments 14 and 15, and in suprasegment XV, segments 40, 41, and 42. Other effects function between suprasegments, but those are more partial and can be analyzed in the complementary work of subsegmentation.

In this film as is generally the case with classic film, the level of units smaller than a segment is where the multiple play of echoes which structures and defines the progressive resolution of the textual system is systematized. Let's first look at what I call *elementary* subsegmentation: that which refers to two or more successive times within the continuity of

a single segment, each one of which forms a sort of small scene—but in a dramatic and not a syntagmatic sense of the term scene, obviously.

Recall the third criterion invoked by Metz to determine the demarcation of autonomous segments: "a major change in the course of the plot." Obviously this criterion lacks precision: what is a *major* change? But this is the wrong way to pose the question, since this demarcation by the plot itself is practically always evident: the limitations of the other two criteria almost automatically lead to the transparency of the third. This grows out of the fact that the classic film determines its segmental units by a series of ruptures in the signified of temporal denotation: when punctuation and variation of the syntagmatic treatment do not indicate the rupture, only a change in the course of the plot can do so. That's why this imprecise criterion is the most dependable: by a sort of tautological reasoning, a narrative change which does not lead to segmentation can only be a minor change. However minor changes are often less "minor" than many other changes in the course of the plot, others which are elevated to the status of segmental demarcation only by the intervention of one or both of the other two criteria (this is obviously not the case when the inscription of multiple criteria is purely redundant, which is quite common). Compare, for example , the mutation introduced in the narrative by the appearance or disappearance of a character with the slight change which is denoted by the punctuation between the autonomous shot of the facade of the ice-skating rink and the scene which follows inside. Which is to say that the segmental demarcation determined by the multiple inscription of the signified of temporal denotation within the filmic signifier only half corresponds (though sometimes more, sometimes less) with the unfolding of the plot, the succession of narrative actions. These dissociations make it necessary to introduce an operation of subsegmentation.

The episodic sequence (as is the case of the bracket syntagma) is singularly privileged in this perspective, as a result of the precise demarcation of each episode. Thus demarcation occurs at this smaller level as a sort of subdemarcation, both by the diegesis (story) and for the most part by an internal punctuation. The episodes are almost always linked (as are some segments within a suprasegment) by an effect of successive rhyme: this is the case with the episodic sequences 14, 21, 28, and 29 (that is to say, all the episodic sequences except 35, which, as I have emphasized, is somewhat bastardized). But a given episode may form a distanced rhyming effect, as in the 4th episode of segment 1 where Gaston and Liane enter Maxim's, which rhymes with segment 40 where Gaston and Gigi enter it.

Inversely, the subsegments of other syntagmatic types are determined

without specific inscription within the cinematic signifier. Their indisputable "vague" demarcation is not a problem—some real scenes are less clearly marked. These subsegments are defined by the entries and exits of characters, particularly evident in this genre film, which is very strongly marked by theatrical representation. The location, actions, musical and sung motifs, obviously powerfully reinforce these scenes which are organized between characters. But these other elements do not have the same degree of significance: the musical and sung motifs, because their boundaries are almost always smaller or equal to the segment, only partially coincide with those of the subsegments; the actions, because they cannot be segmented in the same way, tend to dissolve into the global mass of signifiers; the locations, because the temporal form which determines them is already taken into account by the syntagmatic categories.

Thus, scenes appear and provide numerous rhyming possibilities. From the beginning, in segment 1, the 15 shots which occur before Gigi appears, put Honore in the role of commentator (1a), as he will be again in the first episode of segment 14 (14a), then again in subsegment 34b after the disappearance of Gaston. In the same way in segment 32, the disappearance of Gaston in shot 15 opens a short scene between Mamita and Gaston which corresponds to one which occurred earlier in segment 7, and one which will occur late in subsegment 30b before reappearing in segment 31.

Subsegmental divisions also permit new commutations to be performed between intermediary groupings: they go from subsegments to segments and from segments to suprasegments. Thus, the first group concerning "education" which includes segment 8 and subsegment 9a which follows it, finds its exact echo in suprasegment XVII (28 and 29). In the same way, the extremely long subsegment 30c, subsegment 43b, and the short segments 44 and 45 respectively indicate a very exact repetition of Gaston's two voyages which serve as preludes to his decisions first to keep Gigi, then to marry her. Thus, a global rhyming effect is established between subsegment 30c plus segment 31 on the one hand, and segments 43, 44, 45, and 46 on the other, which is suprasegment XXVI. This last rhyme largely builds the effect of condensation, uniting in the final part of the film (E) a series of elements which appeared earlier in the four other parts.

But in order to expose this productive circulation of the text, it is necessary to go much further in the decomposition of its elements: it is necessary to subsegment the subsegments.

Segmental (Sub-supra) Textual

Subsegmentation goes far beyond what I've done so far. Until now, I've restrained it to scene effects corresponding to one or more shots; and always, in the case of the single shots, to very long ones (like 43b) or to the more specifically determined units in the episodic sequences. Also, I have only performed successive dissociations, in a linearity which sometimes corresponds to the true presentation within the fact, but often only does so partially, mimicking its truth with a representative approximation which is neither altogether false nor altogether true.

This is why I qualified this first subsegmentation as elementary. Complex subsegmentation goes far beyond this. It can be termed microsegmentation to indicate a movement, a progressive work of the textual and analytical force. There is no longer anything on this level corresponding to the strict distinction, there are only degrees of narrative expansion. Therefore, complex segmentation has nothing to do with the shot as a limit: even though the demarcative boundary of the shot constitutes in (and of) itself a textual pertinence and a stylistic index.

I can give only two very summary examples here.

a) *Segment 33*—Shot 302, which shows Gigi in her bedroom (the decor is visible for the first time); she is alone, lying on her bed, stroking her cat, and gets up to let Gaston in, within the continuity of the same shot. This very fragmentary scene is soon echoed by a fill scene, a long autonomous shot which comprises segment 38, where Gigi is singing in her bedroom, holding her cat in her arms. In its simplicity, this effect shows very well the process of the film, a process of varied reduplication of its successive elements. It completes the condensation which operates between the fifth part of the film and the four preceding parts: from segments 37 through 47, there is not one which does not rework a segment, a subsegment, a moment of the four others,deepened by the differentiation which carries the film towards its conclusion.

The three completely unequal subsegments which follow (33b, c, d) are inscribed along three axes which the lack of subsegmental development prohibits working out completely: the first which takes up the large part of the segment (shots 302-307) is one of the series of scenes between Gaston and Gigi; the second, determined by the appearance of Mamita in shot 308, is part of the multiple scenes or fragments of scenes between Gigi, Mamita, and Gaston (this microsegment announces

in particular the dramatic and equally very short microsegment, scene 43a); the third, after Gigi has fled into her bedroom, is inscribed by a second, interior rupture in shot 308, in the series of scenes, either peaceful or dramatic, between Mamita and Gaston.

b) *Segment 47*—here again, a division in the shot creates three minuscule subsegments in the two last shots of the film: in shot 348, Honore sings, leaning against a tree in medium shot; in shot 349, Gigi and Gaston diagonally cross the grass towards a carriage, which they enter. Their movement is accompanied by a camera movement which loses them to return, in the continuity of the same final shot, to Honore in the same fixed framing as in the previous shot.

This last example shows how the progressive decomposition of dramatic occurrences in the filmic chain, opened by the decomposition of the Large Syntagmatic, leads more or less inevitably to the internal analysis of segments and to a comparative analysis of echoing segments. This final segment which displays a refined classicism is thus perceived as constructed according to an a/b/a alternation which reproduces the pattern of the first segment of the film of which this final segment constitutes the resolution: in both cases the narrative alternation is between Honore and the others. But, in the beginning segment there are 21 shots which must be decomposed: neither the first nor the last depict Honore—the last shot of the first segment shows Gigi alone since the narrative is opening; in the final segment, two shots begin and end on Honore, but between these images, Gigi, this time with her husband Gaston.

At this level, which we can call a microsystem, the analysis encounters the multiplied constraint and the dispersion of the specific cinematic codes (codes of camera movement, glances, etc.) which are deployed in the interior and all throughout the macrosystem, the code of syntagmatic categories. The analysis again encounters the voluminous force of the textual system, the full organic play of differential repetition. For example: from segment to segment, as from suprasegment to subsegment, the segmental analysis thus built up would end by constructing, through the numerous scenes which take place at Gigi's, the immense paradigm of entries and exits which supports (along with others which are less obvious) the microsystematic structuration of the narrative units of the film.

Segmental/Familial/Conjugal

I want to insist on finally a last, fundamental effect common to most American film. This effect, through the textural volume, multiplies and closes doubly the area of its own expansion. The systematic stockpiling of symmetries and dissymmetries throughout the filmic chain decomposed by generalized segmentation faithfully copies, (because they, in fact, produce one another) the schema of familial relations which constitute the space of the narrative.

Gigi and Gaston are both children raised, each according to the custom befitting their sex, by a substitute mother (Mamita) and a substitute father (Honore). A three-way dissymetry is inscribed within this symmetry which, from the beginning, makes Gigi and Gaston destined for one another.

a) One man, Honore, corresponds to two women, Mamita and Alicia, in the role of adopted substitute parent.
b) A genealogical gap makes Gaston Honore's nephew, but Gigi, Mamita's granddaughter and Alicia's great-niece.
c) The clear age differences between Gigi and Gaston reproduce this genealogical separation, making one already a man, the other still a child.

It's in suprasegment XV at Trouville that the reciprocal feeling between Gigi and Gaston is crystallized. These three segments are in part constructed on a narrative alternation which juxtaposes Gigi and Gaston on one hand, Honore and Mamita on the other, who meet for the first and last time in the entire film during this suprasegment. They seem to be linked by an old romance, and go so far as to evoke the marriage which failed to unite them. This remembered marriage only serves to mirror the potential marriage of Gigi and Gaston. But it suggests much more. For at this moment, the line of dissymmetry between the generations disappears in favor of a matching counterpart. Mamita tells Honore, with an insistence as useless to the plot as it is necessary to the symbolic functioning: "Gigi is my granddaughter," Honore's gallantry, appropriately structural, pushes him to answer: "Granddaughter, no, daughter." How to better suggest that the children they never had are obviously those which they each adopted and

whom the film will reunite by marriage? Thus, an incestuous fiction is presented, the kind for which the classic-romantic imaginary displays such a predilection. Dissymmetry obviously reappears as does Aunt Alicia, absent from this structure containing four terms. But the dissymmetry of structures serves that which it hides and permits to be resolved: through the difference in ages, Gigi finds in Gaston a substitute father for the one who is even more strangely absent than the mother, who is present, you will remember, only as a singing voice-off—and Gaston will find in Mamita the substitute for a mother whom no one has mentioned.

This is what the story of the film tells us, in a narrative which makes the segmental the textual condition of a happy sliding from the familial to the conjugal, and thus presents in its formal achievement the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Such is the effect of textual production which I've tried to focus on in terms at once different and yet strictly complementary in my analysis of Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, an effect I have called the symbolic closure.

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	Supra S	S	Place	SS	Characters	Shots	Syntagm	Music	Actions
	0	0	Credits on multiple engravings			X		Champagne --- Gigi	
A MAJOR PARTS	I	I	The Woods	a	Honore	1-15	Sequence	Theme woods	Honore introduces the Bois de Boulogne. He introduces himself:bachelor,stockholder,lover.
				b	Honore Gigi	16-21		Little Girls Theme by Honore	He sings praises of little girls and introduces Gigi who is playing with her friends.She passes by and goes away to the woods.
	II	2	At Gigi's (ext. int)		Gigi Mamita	22-24	Sequence	Singing Exer. /mother off/	Gigi arrives at her grandmother Mamitas reminds her that today is visiting day at her Aunt Alicia's.
	III	3	In Paris At Gaston's (ext.)		/Honore/	25	Autono-mous Shot	Little Girls Variations	A coach crosses the avenue and stops in front of a luxurious building.
		4	At Gaston's (int.)		Gaston Tradesman Servant	26	Autono-mous Shot		His uncle's visit is announced to Gaston Lachaille. He settles some business affairs and goes out.
		5	At Gaston's (ext.)		Honore	27-28	Sequence		Meeting of the uncle and nephew who leave for a coach ride through Paris.
		6	In Paris		Honore Gaston	29-40	Scene	It's a bore then by Honore/Gaston	Honore praises the charms of life (Paris, wine, high society). Gaston lui replique que tout l'ennuie, et fair arreter le cabriolet.
	IV	7	At Gigi's (ext. int.)		Gaston Mamita	41-48	Scene		Gaston arrives at Mamita's. They speak about Gigi. Gaston is astonished by the "lessons" Alicia gives Gigi.

v	8	At Alicia's (Ext.-Int.)		Alicia Gigi	49-64	Sequence		Gigi arrives, running, at Alicia's. Learns about manners (how to eat squabs). Conversation on the topic of marriage.
	9	At Alicia's (Int.)	a	Alicia Gigi	65-67	Scene		Lesson on Education (Continuation): Jewelry, cigars. Conversation on love & art. Alicia leaves.
			b	Gigi	68-71	Scene	The....	Gigi rants about parisians and love & leaves.
VI	10	The Garden		Gigi	72-75	Sequence	...Parisians par Gigi	Gigi goes on singing while crossing the Tuileries and finishes by stopping to sit on a bench.
	11	The Garden		Gigi Gaston	76-82	Scene		Gaston arrives in a coach, recognizes Gigi (Gaston, do you make love all the time".) and takes her along to the ice-skating palace all the while teasing her. He is supplosed to meet Liane d'Exelmans at ice skating palace.
VII	12	The ice skating/ palace		Gigi Gaston/	83	Autonomous Shot	Waltz	The facade of the ice skating palace.
	13	The ice skating palace		Gigi Gaston Liane Ice skater	84-90	Sequence	Waltz	They enter and sit down. On the rink, Liane & her ice skating instructor. Gigi finds her crude & vulgar, then leaves abruptly. Liane joins him & reminds him that they have to meet Honore at Maxim's. They leave.
B VIII	14	At Maxim's (Entrance)	a	Honore (+x)	91	Episodic sequence	theme Maxim's	Honore introduces & praises "Maxim's".
			b	Baron de la Cour. Girl	91-92		Theme Maxim's chorus spoken/ sang	Baron de la Cour enters with a creature.
			c	Honore Girl	92-93		" "	Honore enters with a creature.
			d	Gaston Liane	93-94		" "	Gaston enters with Liane.

(Pages 346-353 retyped by Speech Communication Module, ERIC/RCS to improve readability of journal.)

Supra S	S	Place	SS		Characters	Shots	Syntagm	Music	Actions
	15	At Maxim's room			Gaston Liane Honore	95-105	Sequence	She is so gay tonight by Gaston.	At the supper table, Liane is exuberant, Gaston is gloomy: "She is not thinking of me." Honore asks Liane to dance. Liane more and more exuberant. Gaston more and more irritated.
IX	16	At Honore's (int.)			Gaston Honore Manual	106-121	Scene	It's a bore by Honore/ Gaston, then Manuel.	Gaston arrives at his uncles to announce that Liane is cheating on him with a skating instructor. Honore drags Gaston to Honfleur with him, where the couple is hiding, to settle this affair in a gentlemanly way.
X	17	In Honfleur			Honore Gaston Liane Ice Skater	122-134	Sequence		Honore and Gaston arrive at an inn and discover the couple. Gaston offers the man a thousand francs to dissapear and bids Liane farewell, who faints.
	18	Journal (Newspaper)			(Gaston Liane)	135	Autonomous shot		On the first page a picture of Liane. "Sugar Prince breaks with Liane d'Exelmans".
XI	19	At Alicia's			Alicia Mamita	136	Autonomous shot		Alicia and Mamita discuss "Liane's suicide."
XII	20	At Honore's			Gaston Honore Manual	137	Autonomous shot		Gaston arrives at Honore's who congratulates him on this first suicide. He dissuades him from secluding himself and pushes him to be visible and "to live it up".
C XIII	21	At Gigi's (int.)/	A	a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	138	Episodic Sequence	It's a bore	Gigi's hands are holding an illustrated program. "Gaston Lachaille opens Pre Catelan for a gigantic party".
		Pre Catelan	B	b	Gaston Girl Honore	139-141			Dinnertime: Honore who is having fun, several girls, and Gaston yawning.
		/At Gigi's (int)/	A	a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	142			Gigi's hands holding an illustrated program. "Who will be Gaston Lachaille's Queen at the battle of flowers".

	21	(Cont.) The Woods	C	c	Gaston Girl	143-144			On a float covered with flowers, Gaston next to a bored girl.
		/ At Gigi's (int)/	A	a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	145			Gigi's hands hold an illustrated program. "Two thousand guests invited to Gaston Lachaille's masked ball."
		/At Gaston's (int)/	D	d	Gaston Honore	146-148			Honore looks for Gaston among the costumed crowd. He finds him asleep in a corner on sofa.
		/At Gigi's (int)	A	a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	149			Gigi's hands hold an illustrated program. "Gaston Lachaille invites the opera company to his house."
XIV	22	At Gigi's (int)		a	Gigi Mamita Gaston	149-154	Scene	Little girls whistled by Gigi.	Someone rings the bell. Gigi gets up to open the door, finds Gaston. In the kitchen Mamita prepares a cassoulet. Gaston decides to put off his evening reception and send Gigi to bring a note of apology.
				b	Mamita Gaston	155-156		Skating exercises mother off	Mamita and Gaston speak about Honore.
	23	At Gigi's (int)			Gigi Gaston Mamita	157-175	Scene	Champagne by Gigi Gaston Mamita	Gaston and Gigi play cards. Gigi makes him promise to take her to Trouville if she wins. Gaston is furious but goes along with her. She cheats and wins. They sing and dance with Mamita, while finishing off a bottle of champagne.
XV	24	Trouville The beach The sea			Gigi Gaston Girl Man Honore Mamita	176-183	Sequence	Champagne	While Gaston and Gigi play in the water, Honore gets ready to give a girl a note when he notices Mamita on the beach greeting him. He takes his note back and a man enters the girl's cabin.
	25	Trouville The tennis court			Gigi Gaston Girl Man Honore Mamita	184-194	Sequence	Champagne	Honore arrives at the tennis court. At girl, wearing a fancy dress is on one side, playing seriously. On the other side Gaston plays with Gigi who is running about crazily under the amazed gaze of Mamita.

Supra S	S	Place	SS	Characters	Shots	Syntagm	Music	Actions
	26	At Trouville The Terrace The Beach		Gigi Gatson Girl Honore Mamita	195-223	Sequence	I remember it well by Honore/ Mamita	Gigi and Gaston are on the beach with two donkeys, Mamita is on the terrace watching and laughing at at them. Honore gets ready to follow the girl who is entering the hotel, then notices Mamita and sits with her instead. They evoke at great length their past mutual love. Nightfall. Gigi and Gaston come back, pulling their donkeys.
XVI	27	At Alicia's (int)		Mamita Alicia	224-235	Scene		Alicia warns a flabbergasted Mamita of the probable passionate love of Gaston for Gig. She urges her to speed up Gigi's education before Gaston's return from Monte Carlo.
	28	At Alicia's	a	Alicia Gigi	236	Episodic Sequence	Little Girls	The lesson: to serve coffee, but Gigi spills it.
			b	Alicia Gigi	237			A lesson: to walk, to sit down; without much success
			c	Alicia Gigi	238			A lesson: to sip wine; Gigi gets drunk.
			d	Alicia Gigi	239			A lesson: to choose a cigar; Gigi breaks it in two.
	29	At Alicia's	a	Alicia's Mamita Gigi model designer	240-246	Episodic Sequence	Little Girls	The modeling of a dress which Mamita and Gigi like but which Alicia despises.
			b	Alicia Mamita Gigi etc...	247-250			A second dress liked by Mamita and Gigi, despised by Alicia.
			c	Alicia Mamita Gigi etc...				A third dress that Mamita and Gigi dislike. Alicia chose it.
			d	Alicia Mamita Gigi etc....	255-256			Gig, appalled, tries the dress.

VIII	30	At Gigi's	A	a	Gigi Mamita Gaston	257-268	Sequence	Little Girls	Gaston arrives at Gigi's who immediately runs to her room and reappears wearing a white dress. Gaston who does not accept this metamorphosis is angry. He leaves, then comes back to invite Gigi to tea at the "Reservoirs". Mamita forbids it and Gigi goes back to her room.
				b	Mamita Gaston	269-275		She is a baby by Gaston.	Mamita explains to Gaston that she cannot allow Gigi to go out alone with him. Gaston becomes angry, swears at Mamita, and leaves.
		From Gigi's to Gigi's (ext,)	B	c	Gaston	276-289		Gigi by Gaston	He walks through Paris until he reaches le jarden des Tuileries, where he earlier had met Gigi and then he returns. On the way to it, Gigi had been a child without charm. On his return she is a young lady with whom he has fallen in love.
	31	At Gigi's			Gaston Mamita	290-291	Scene		He rings the door and demands that Mamita receive him.
XIX	32	At Alicia's	A	a	Alicia	292-301	Scene		Mamita tells Alicia of Gaston's proposition to keep Gigi: private residence, a car, etc.
XX	33	At Gigi's (room)	A	a	Gigi	302	Scene	I remember it well.	Gigi leaves her bedroom to open the door for Gaston.
		At Gigi's (family room)	B	b	Gaston Gigi	302-308		Gigi	Gigi refuses Gaston's offer and bursts into tears when she learns that he loves her.
		At Gigi's (Family room)		c	Gaston Gigi	308			Mamita rushes in, Gigi runs away to her bedroom.
		At Gigi's (family room)		d	Mamita Gaston	308			Gaston insults Mamita and leaves.

Supra S	S	Place	SS		Characters	Shots	Syntagm	Music	Actions
XXI	34	At the restaurant		a	Honore Gaston	309-341	Scene		Gaston arrives at a restaurant where Honore is lunching and explains his disappointment to him. Honore consoles him and invites him to meet "Michele" and himself at Maxim's that evening.
				b	Honore	312		Poor a Boy by Gaston	Honore congratulates himself on having reached an age which no longer includes such conflicts.
XXII	35	On the telephone	A	a	Mamita	313	Lunch in Episodes		Mamita telephones, crying.
		At Alicia's	B	b	Alicia	314			Alicia hangs up and has a cab called.
		In Paris	C	c	(Alicia)	315		Little Girls variation	A coach crosses a square somewhere in Paris.
	36	At Gigi's			Alicia Mamita Gigi Gaston	316-325	Scene	Singing exercises /mother off/	Alicia arrives at Gigi's and reproaches Mamita for her carelessness. Gaston rings. He has received a letter from Gigi, who comes out of her bedroom for a moment to tell Gaston that she prefers to be miserable with him rather than without him. Gaston leaves. The two sisters look at one another.
XXIII	37	At Gaston			Gaston Jeweler	326	Autonomous Shot	Champagne	Gaston chooses a jewel for Gigi.
XXIV	38	At Gigi's			Gigi	327	Autonomous Shot	Say a Prayer for me tonight by Gigi.	Gigi gets mentally prepared for the evening she is going to experience.
	39	At Gigi's			Gigi Alicia Mamita Gaston	328-329	Scene		Gigi leaves her bedroom in her evening dress. She kisses Alicia and Mamita, opens the door after Gaston rings. They leave.

XV	40	At Maxim's (entree)			Gigi Gaston	330-331	Sequence	Theme Maxim's	Gaston and Gigi enter Maxim's, go in towards the table.
	41	At Maxim's (salle)			Gigi Gaston Honore	332-335	Sequence	She is so gay tonight.	At the table, Gigi applies to perfection Alicia's lessons; the coffee, the cigar, the jewels. They get up to dance greeting on their way a surprised Honore who identifies Gigi.
	42	At Maxim's			Gigi Gaston Honore	336-337	Sequence	" "	Gaston gives Gigi his gift. Gigi raves about the beauty of the diamonds like a woman of the world. She shows off the jewels. Gaston irritated, gets up and drags her towards the exit.
XXVI	43	From Gigi's	A	a	Gigi Gaston Mamita	338	Sequence		He drags Gigi by the hand, ascends the stairs, Gigi rushes to Mamita's arms crying. Gaston descends and walks through Paris.
			B	b	Gaston	339-340			
	44	Les Tuileries			Gaston	341	Autonomous shot	She is a babe. ---------- Gigi	He arrives in front of the fountain of the Tuileries and leaves again.
	45	At Gigi's (ext)			Gaston	342-344	Sequence		He retraces his steps and slowly goes up Gigi's staircase.
	46	At Gigi's (int)			Gaston Gigi Mamita	345-347	Scene		Mamita and Gigi are sitting down. Mamita opens the door to Gaston and Begs him to avoid any scandal. Gaston asks Mamita for Gigi's hand who lovingly rushes toward him.
XXVII	47	The Woods			Honore Gigi Gaston	348-349	Sequence	Little Girls by Honore	Honore sings. Gigi and Gaston appear and leave in a cab. Honore continues to sing.
0 bis	o bs	Ending on a painting				A shot			